Week ending January 29 1949 Every Thursday Threepence

JOHN BULL

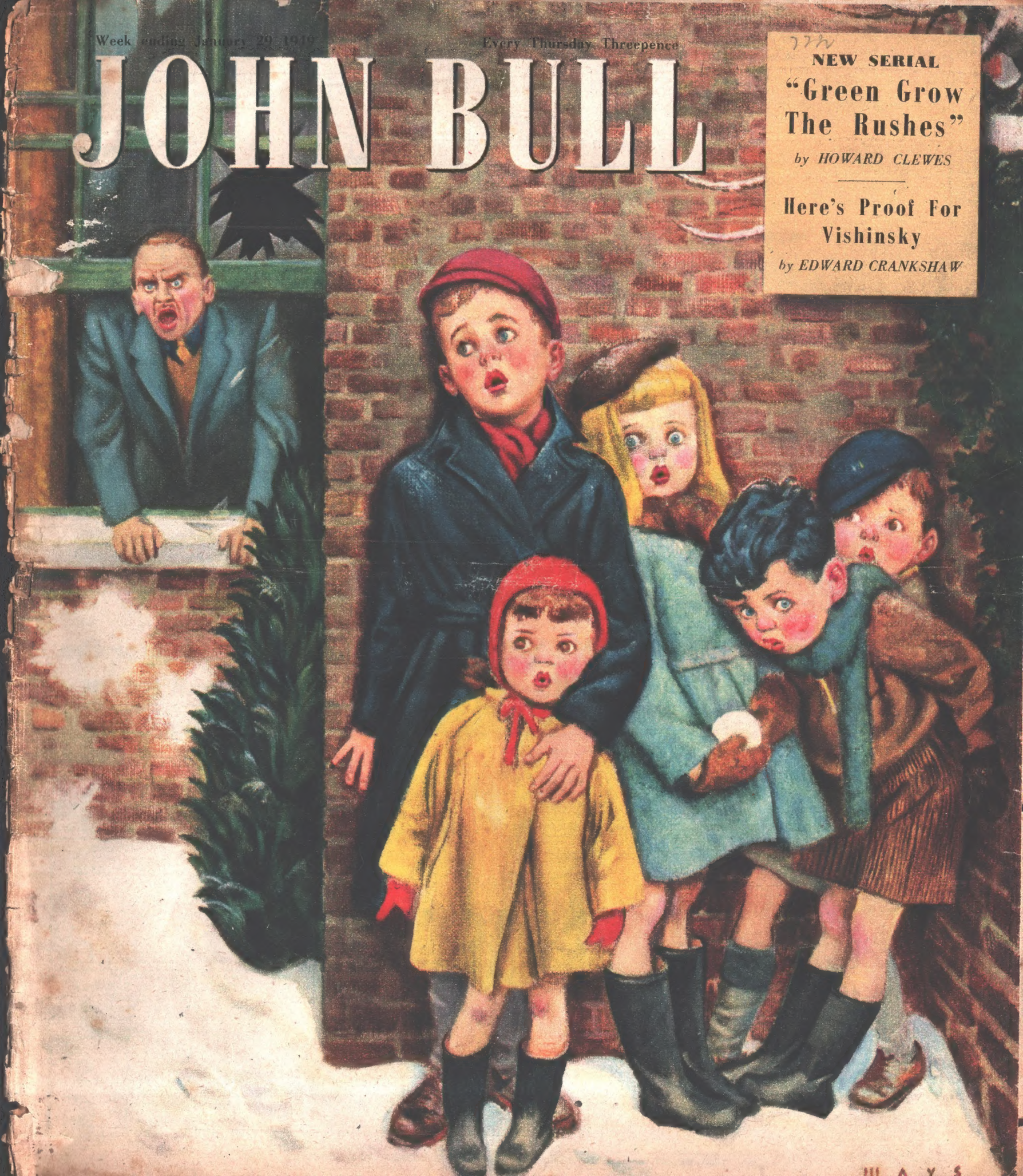
NEW SERIAL

"Green Grow The Rushes"

by HOWARD CLEWES

Here's Proof For Vishinsky

by EDWARD CRANKSHAW



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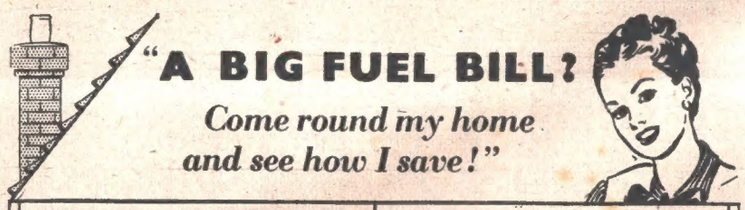
For every kind of Cough

From Timothy Whites & Taylors, Boots and all chemists, 1/7 and 3/9½ per bottle, including Purchase Tax.



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Come round my home and see how I save!"

HOT WATER Hot water is simply liquid money, so I never turn a tap unless I really must. And once the water's hot I *keep* it hot: we have lagged the tank and every inch of pipe, and we scream for help if we see a dripping tap.

ROOM HEATING I used to switch on electric fires without a thought. But coal fires are more economical for long-period heating, and you save no end of money if you use fire-bricks and damp the fire down with slack

COOKING It's fun to see how far you can make fuel go. If I'm using the oven I plan to cook everything in it, potatoes and all; and if I use my steamer I fill it from the hot tap.

FREE—a book full of valuable hints called "65 Easy Ways of Saving Money". Write to the Information Branch (Dept.36c), Ministry of Fuel and Power, 7, Millbank, London, S.W.1, asking for Booklet.

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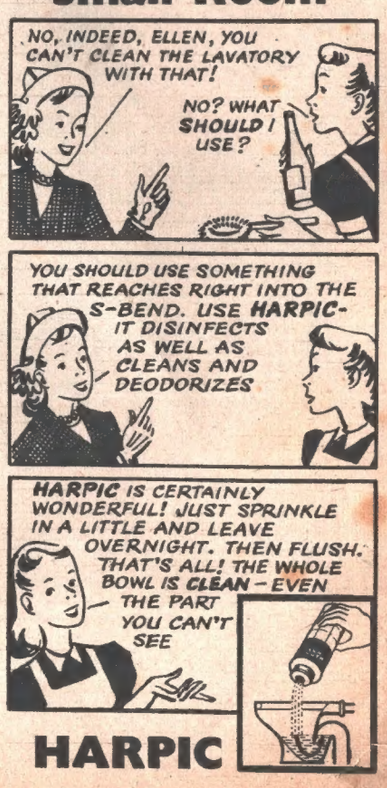
Be sure not to miss next Sunday's illuminating chapters!

BIG idea for the Small Room


NO, INDEED, ELLEN, YOU CAN'T CLEAN THE LAVATORY WITH THAT!
NO? WHAT SHOULD I USE?
YOU SHOULD USE SOMETHING THAT REACHES RIGHT INTO THE S-BEND. USE HARPIC- IT DISINFECTS AS WELL AS CLEANS AND DEODORIZES
HARPIC IS CERTAINLY WONDERFUL! JUST SPRINKLE IN A LITTLE AND LEAVE OVERNIGHT. THEN FLUSH. THAT'S ALL! THE WHOLE BOWL IS CLEAN – EVEN THE PART YOU CAN'T SEE
HARPIC

B-r-e-a-t-h-e with Relief

Yes! When your Nose is cleared this way you literally breathe with relief. Act today to get rid of the distress of stuffy Head Colds and obstinate Catarrh. Get a jar or tin of 'Mentholatum.' Insert a little of this breathable balm inside each nostril. Your very next breath carries antiseptic vapours right up through the Nose, opening up the nasal passages, soothing soreness, reducing swelling. Free breathing is restored *just by breathing* the 'Mentholatum' vapours. Rubbed on the throat and chest, 'Mentholatum' Balm loosens the tightness caused by Chest Colds. 'Mentholatum' Balm in Jars and Tins 1/7 (inc. tax). Also in Liquid Form (with Applicator) 1/7. All Chemists.

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Starting a Cold?

...You can check it quickly with this "Two-Way" Treatment

1. GARGLE FREQUENTLY WITH T.C.P.

2. TAKE INTERNAL DOSES OF T.C.P.

To Deal With Germs In Nose & Throat

At the very first symptoms, start gargling and also rinse out the nostrils every few hours with diluted T.C.P. T.C.P. quickly penetrates, and its swift, safe antiseptic action tackles the infection where it first gets a hold—in the nose and throat membranes.

At the same time you will find that the soothing, decongestive action of T.C.P. rapidly relieves throat soreness and clears clogged nostrils.

To Help The System Throw Off Infection

Two or three times a day, drink a teaspoonful of T.C.P. in water. These doses are absolutely safe and beneficial. They help the system quickly to drive out the Cold toxins (poisons) that cause feverishness, shivering and headache, before they can get a hold.

It is this *extra* internal action that enables the T.C.P. "Two-Way" Treatment, if started promptly, to check most Colds, often overnight.

T.C.P. is obtainable from all Chemists, in 1/7 and 3/9 bottles, including Tax.

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7/9 RUBY & WHITE

RUBY and WHITE Good full bodied wines.	Per Bott.	7/9
BRITISH SHERRY. Brown Excellent for general use.	"	8/6
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GINGER WINE and ORANGE WINE Full alcoholic strength. Ideal for parties.		8/3

If you have any difficulty in procuring, please write Whiteways, Whimple, Devon, for name of nearest agents.

WHITEWAY'S WINES

CVS-108

GIBBS HAPPY FAMILIES

Tip for Treasure Hunters . . .

1 **MR. EARTH** the Explorer is in danger! Trouble is brewing. His journey has lasted so long that stores are getting low . . . but the natives *must* have gifts.

2 **"LUCKY** we've still got some Gibbs," cries Master Earth the Explorer's son, "those red, blue and green cases are sure to please the natives."

3 **"YES,** and they'll like the fresh Gibbs taste as much as we do," agrees Mrs. Earth the Explorer's wife, "it will spruce them up a bit, too."

4 **SERVICE** with a smile now . . . Gibbs works like a charm! Mr. Earth says "Gibbs solid dentifrice is treasure indeed, it lasts so long and only costs **9d.** each."

OD 285 - 1160

A good brush you can well afford

Quality brushes *aren't* expensive if they're marked HYGEX. This rubber-cushioned brush in bristle costs only 11/6d.; in nylon 16/-; in wire 5/10d. And every rubber-cushioned brush in the HYGEX range promotes healthier hair, by its deep, even penetration to the scalp. For men, there are HYGEX hairbrushes too—sterilised shaving brushes are from 5/- to 5 gns.

11/6

GOOD BRUSHES ARE STAMPED—

Hygex

THE BRUSHES FOR HEALTHIER HAIR

Take it from me

PHILLIPS wafer-thin Superfine Stick-a-Soles, *securely fixed with Solution only*, will keep your shoes as smart as new. They are invisible in wear.

Phillips STICK-A-SOLES AND HEELS

double the life of your shoes

It's Murder when shirts shrink till they choke you! So when buying washable cottons, ask to see the "Sanforized" mark . . . your assurance the fabric can't shrink out of fit.

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JANUARY 29, 1949 VOLUME 85 NUMBER 2222

The Parks at Last

THE BEST OF BRITAIN'S natural playgrounds should be preserved for the people—for ever—when the National Parks Bill is passed this year.

But two things are necessary if the whole, far-sighted plan is not to fall short of its intentions.

First, it must be made clear that the rival claims of landowners, War Office land-grabbers and other parties interested only in their own limited objectives, cannot be allowed to obstruct or interfere with the setting aside of the most beautiful and suitable areas for the National Parks. The public has a prior claim.

Secondly, the administration of the parks must be in the right hands. JOHN BULL is not satisfied that the Government's present plan to run the parks through the county councils is adequate.

The whole idea of National Parks is that they should be really national.

We think it is essential to establish them as inviolate sanctuaries where sectional and local interests should be safeguarded as far as possible, but should never be allowed to affect the independence—the freedom—of the whole. Neither the scenery nor the amenities must be subject to local restrictions.

And as several projected parks, including the Lakes and North Wales, are in more than one county, there is bound to be a tug of war between local authorities *unless* the national status of the parks is established from the first.

However, the first important thing is to get the principle of National Parks on to the Statute Book. Future generations of townsfolk in search of health and recreation will bless the M.P.s who vote for the Bill. There should be no Party battle over the parks. We want to see the first ones established by 1950 at latest.

This Year's Holidays

MEANWHILE, PLANS NOW being made should improve your summer holiday prospects for 1949.

At last it looks as though the father of a family is going to get a squarer deal when he takes his family to the seaside.

The main reason is that the pressure of competition in the holiday trade is beginning to take effect. The resorts are now getting together to counter the enormous growth in popularity of the holiday camps.

Some people like camp holidays; others don't. But all must agree that the camps are breaking the old monopoly of seaside entertainment once enjoyed—and, in too many cases, exploited—by hotelkeepers and tradesmen in the resort towns.

It is realized that the already serious loss of business could become more serious this year because the high cost of living is driving more parents, as well as younger holiday-makers, to look for cheaper places to stay.

So the Holidays Board is trying to help the resorts by sending them a long memorandum full of ideas for brightening them up. One or two towns, including Southend, have already come out with a scheme for all-in holidays—an obvious bid to rival the single payment a holiday camper makes for his board, lodging and entertainment.

After all, this is not quite a new idea—comprehensive payments for tours abroad were introduced by the travel agencies many years ago. And there is every reason why the system should be applied to holidays at home—if only to cut out the profiteers.

There can be only one outcome of the struggle for your money between resorts and camps; better and cheaper holidays for all.

Rejoice, therefore—and spend only where you are guaranteed a good return in amusement and relaxation, plus the amount of real service you are entitled to expect for your money.

Ireland Divided

FEBRUARY IS LIKELY to see a final, permanent settlement of Ireland's future. The British Government is to guarantee in law that Northern Ireland shall not be merged with Eire without its own consent.

And Northern Ireland is to hold a general election to prove that it wants to stay British, not Irish.

Sir Basil Brooke, the Ulster premier, will win his election. He is an exceedingly astute politician, and what he does not know about election campaigning is not worth a vote anywhere.

So the Union Jack will be nailed to the Belfast flagpoles. The partition of Ireland will remain, with a frontier and customs barrier between the six northern counties and the rest.

The Southern Irish won't like this—but they themselves made it inevitable by breaking their last legal ties with the British Crown.

Now the right course is to press on with Anglo-Irish trade and exchange of goods. The economic bond will be stronger in the long run than the political one—and far less irksome.

Making Mining Safer

FOR THE FIRST TIME in mining history a big attempt is afoot to make the pits safer.

The fearful curse of pneumoconiosis—the group of dust diseases which wreck miners' lungs, is now being attacked scientifically with new sprays and antidotes.

And the National Coal Board is teaching its employees how best to use the system of joint consultation to get rid of perils and delays in the pits.

It's the ordinary miner who knows best what his dangers are. If he tells the consultation committee that by moving a track here or a cable there his job can be made quicker, cleaner and safer—there speaks the expert who cannot be ignored.

Mining is still the most dangerous industry. So we wish the Coal Board success in this campaign to make it safer. The reward should be more recruits for the coal-face; more production targets hit.

LOOK HE'S WALKING!

Thanks to "Chunkys"

THE 'LUXURY' BOOTEE WITH THE SOFT non-slip SOLE

Obtainable at most good Shoe Shops, including Manfield's, Saxone, Dolcis, Lilley & Skinner, Benefit Footwear, Randall's, Timpson's, Stylo, etc.

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Enchanting JUDY GARLAND, *star of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's, "The Pirate," says: "I always use Lux Toilet Soap." The Lux Toilet Soap massage technique, used by lovely stars of Hollywood and Britain, will beautify your skin wonderfully.*

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FIRST TIME IN BRITAIN

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DISSOLVED ORAL VACCINE

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CATARRH and BRONCHITIS

For over 12 years, LANTIGEN 'B' has been widely used throughout Australia as a remedy for Catarrh and Bronchitis. Its reputation then spread to Canada. And now LANTIGEN 'B' is available from chemists in this country. LANTIGEN 'B' not only treats the disorder but builds up resistance to further attacks. A bottle costs 25/8 including purchase tax. Ask your chemist for the fully descriptive LANTIGEN leaflet.

Taken like ordinary medicine

LANTIGEN (ENGLAND) LTD., BAGSHOT, SURREY

SNAKE-EYES GETS 'REGULAR'

"Snake-eyes," I said to him one morning, "you look as if something had rolled over you—*drained*, you look, *worn-out, wiped-up*. Why?"

"*Dunno*," *he said.*

"This is a situation that can alter," I said.

"*Not in this world*," *said Snake-eyes, sadly.*

"I *promise*," I said. "To me it's obvious you need a bit more bulk to travel through your 30 feet of inner tubing."

"*Make yourself clear*," *he said.*

"With pleasure," I said. "With all the soft food nowadays, your tubes don't get enough bulk for the muscles to take hold of. Now keep awake, Snake-eyes," I advised him, seeing the old glaze creep over his eyes, "I'm telling you how to get your insides in order."

"*Sure, sure*," *he said.*

"Just," I said, "just have Kellogg's All-Bran for breakfast every morning—two tablespoons with a little milk and sugar, or any way you like it. Goodbye," I said, "I'll take the thanks later."

Which is what happened in a mere five days' time.

"*I'm a new man*" *purred Snake-eyes.* "*A better man, since I heard from you about . . .*"

"Yes," I interrupted, "same old pay-off—thanks again due to Kellogg's All-Bran."

• • •

KELLOGG'S ALL-BRAN relieves constipation trouble, keeps you 'regular.' Made from rich outer layers of whole-wheat deliciously oven-toasted with malt, salt, and sugar. Makes a splendid breakfast, and many appetizing cakes, buns and surprise dishes. 7½d. a packet, from your grocer.

Cats need care

Missing their natural medicines—found in certain grasses and herbs—domestic cats and kittens need a substitute to keep them handsome and happy. From Karswood—experienced in the preparation of animal medicines—comes the answer

KARSWOOD CAT POWDERS provide the ideal corrective, in which nerve tonic, blood purifier and mineral salts are perfectly balanced to meet the high standard set by Karswood veterinary products

Start giving Karswood *regularly* right away, and watch pussy flourish—coat glossy and whiskers a-quiver. It's tasteless and easy to give in food or drink—and it keeps pussy p-u-r-r-i-n-g!

KARSWOOD *cat* **POWDERS**

Chemists, Corn Dealers and Pet Shops now stock Karswood Cat Powders in packets of 8 for 9d. A product of E. Griffiths Hughes Ltd. Manchester 3

"MUMMY HURRY!"

"THE GROCER'S GOT SOME NEWFORGE ULSTER BROTH"

Yes, Newforge Soup is something worth hurrying for—something you won't want to miss.

TASTE-TESTED by Housewives. All Newforge Fine Foods are tested by an independent panel of British Housewives. Only when their full approval is secured do these Fine Foods go into the Shops—that's why NEWFORGE FINE FOODS are the real housewives' choice.

Six delicious varieties—

ULSTER BROTH · CREME OF TOMATO VEGETABLE · THICK MEAT SOUP CLEAR MEAT SOUP (Consommé) BEEF AND VEGETABLE BROTH

Newforge Soups are 7½d. and 10d. a can. (Creme of Tomato 9d. and 11½d.)

Ask your Grocer today. Ask your grocer what other Newforge fine food he has, such as Canned Fruits, Vegetables, Meats and Sweet Puddings.

Choose the soup with the blue label

NEWFORGE LIMITED · BELFAST · ULSTER

How right they are!

Weston's

Chocolate Table Fingers

Exactly the right kind of velvety chocolate to cover exactly the right kind of crispy biscuit! There's perfect agreement between the two in Weston's Chocolate Table Fingers—and you get 20 or more in a quarter-pound (though supplies are still limited, alas!)

Weston's BISCUITS

PEARCE DUFF'S

Custard & Jellies

The choice of a century

says **Mrs. P. DEE**

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For ACID INDIGESTION

chew a couple of

'MILK of MAGNESIA' (REGD) TABLETS

By correcting acidity they give prompt relief from indigestion. *'Milk of Magnesia' Tablets are handy to carry in handbag or pocket.

** Trade mark of Phillips' preparation of magnesia.*

30 Tablets 1/3 — 75 Tablets 2/6

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W. D. & H. O. Wills, Branch of The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain & Ireland), Ltd. C.C.726.B.A.

Vishinsky can have only one reason for attempting to explain away the barrier that hems in the Russians as well as keeping others out

Here's proof for Vishinsky!

by EDWARD CRANKSHAW

For all Vishinsky's denials and for all the soft-soaping by conducted tourists, the wall that Russia has erected for herself and her satellites against the West is a grim reality —and far more than a merely physical barrier

IN PARIS RECENTLY Mr. Vishinsky objected indignantly and at length to the phrase "Iron Curtain." He insisted that this was a figment of Western propaganda, designed to camouflage or justify Western aggression.

To be sure, the phrase is somewhat rough and ready. But if it does not satisfy Mr. Vishinsky, let him supply another. Because "Iron Curtain" aptly describes an inescapable fact in international relations.

The barrier is real, and it repeats itself in a thousand different aspects, from the very palpable phalanx of Tommy-guns and immensely long spike-bayonets wielded by the green-capped frontier guards to the conscription of Soviet scientists and artists in the cause of the Lie—that lie which assures the patient and backward people of Russia that they belong to a superior species of man, owing nothing to the corrupt and decadent West.

For this barrier, this curtain, is not a one-way affair rigged up simply to keep foreigners out of Russia and her satellites, for reasons good or bad; it is a double barrier, designed also to keep the Russians and their subject peoples out of what the rest of us optimistically call the free world.

I don't know what sort of a phrase Mr. Vishinsky, with his swift imagination and his great gift for corrosive phrase-making, would invent to characterize this barrier. Even he must admit that freedom of intercourse between Russia and the rest of the world is more restricted than it is between the rest of the world and any other country, with the possible exception of Tibet.

Perhaps he would call it a moral cordon, through which anybody worthy, foreigner or Russian, may freely pass—the only limiting factor being that so few people (about one in a million) are found worthy!

Visitors Are Hoodwinked

But it is perhaps not worth bothering about Mr. Vishinsky, whose ideas and motives are no more interesting than the ideas and motives of any successful careerist anywhere.

What is more important is that his flat denial that there is any such thing as the Iron Curtain is supported by other people who should know better.

Decent people go to Russia, or Poland, are fêted, shown the sights, dined by provincial governors who, unknown to their flattered guests, may really be M.V.D. chieftains controlling half a million slaves, introduced to authors who speak French and factory managers who have read Dickens and Mark Twain, spend an evening in a workers' theatre, and come rushing back full of the news that there is no Iron

"Let Vishinsky explain why no Russian dares to mix with foreigners either at home or abroad"

Curtain because they have crossed the frontier and come back again alive.

Having performed this astonishing feat, all they have proved is, as already suggested, that "Iron Curtain" is not the happiest phrase. True, in the last resort, the barrier is one of guns and bayonets.

Guns and bayonets may be all right for the rank and file of humanity, but they are not much good against the infiltration of ideas and they are rather too crude for distinguished foreign churchmen or visiting politicians. These have to be persuaded that they see what they do not see and do not see what they do see. It is all done with mirrors, and the apparatus here employed makes the image of the Iron Curtain seem naïve.

Not that the simple physical barrier does not exist. The mere act of getting in or out of the Soviet Union and, in a slightly less degree, her satellites, is hard enough.

Hordes of Green-caps

On no frontier in modern times has it been possible to see such a parade of truculent force. Visitors to the U.S.S.R. seem mostly to imagine that these hordes of green-caps (the Frontier branch of the M.V.D.) are primarily employed to keep foreigners out; but in fact their chief function is to keep Russians in.

There are other ways of keeping foreigners out, and the number of would-be visitors or spies who have to be turned back by force is small. On the other hand, without the knowledge that the immense land frontier is watched from end to end by an *élite* corps which shoots at sight, many, many Soviet citizens would find their way across.

Foreigners are kept out by the simple process of refusing visas, and today, with Intourist (the Soviet agency for conducted tours) still a dead letter, visas are granted only to specially selected visitors and to delegations.

There is no such thing as a trip to Russia simply to have a look round or visit friends, or even to pursue a particular and innocuous line of inquiry, such as non-political academic research.

But the Soviet Union's self-severance from the rest of the world is in itself something far deeper and more radical than a mere physical sealing of frontiers.

By a surgical operation of extreme elaboration, Stalin is seeking to isolate the consciousness of the Soviet people from that of humanity as a whole.

He has ruthlessly cut through the infinitely complex network of nerves and ligaments and blood vessels which conduct, convey and apply the common experience and understanding of our civilization. He has cut a whole area from the composite brain of mankind and is trying to make of it a special Soviet brain.

Still Some Contact

The patient, after a fashion, still lives; but my own opinion is that it still lives only because not even Stalin has been able to sever every connecting thread, so that even now, in spite of the crude frontier barriers, and in spite of the attempted segregation of their consciousness, the Russians still receive some nourishment from the outer world.

One would be hard put to it to say whether the chief aim of the Soviet Government is to keep the outer world in ignorance of Russia, or to keep the Russians in ignorance of the outer world. But anyone who has lived in Russia for any length of time can have no doubt about the extreme importance attached to the latter. That is not to say that the Iron Curtain as generally understood is not designed chiefly to frustrate the inquisitive foreigner. But the Iron Curtain, as such, is, as I have already said, a crude affair. The real work of art is the erection and manipulation of the endless series of mirrors and velvet curtains on the other side—the unreal setting in which the Russians themselves live out their days, as ignorant of what is going on in the next city as they are ignorant of what is going on in London or Paris or New York.

There may be riots in Rostov, famine may decimate Kharkov or Kiev, civil war may break out in Magadan, and the average Londoner may sooner or later hear about these things, the average Muscovite never. And what he does hear in the way of hard news from official sources he does not believe.

I remember in Moscow at the time of the Stalingrad victory, when the people of Britain and America seem to have been beside themselves with delight, patiently but vainly trying to convince certain quite loyal Muscovites that in fact they could rejoice, that in fact the communiqués were right, that in fact the Red Army had at last won a great victory which might change the course of the war. They simply would not, or could not, believe.

And yet these same people, although they distrusted utterly the word of their own Government (for which they were grimly fighting) on specific points like defeat or victory in war or the promise of plenty in peace, believed implicitly a thousand and one lies about themselves and about the outer world which, because they had absorbed them almost all their lives, they could not recognize as the despised government propaganda but took for natural truths.

Such as the lie that, miserable as they were, they were better off than the ordinary citizens of Britain and America. Such as the lie that Britain and America would combine to fall on the Soviet Union once the war with Germany was won. Such as the silly little lie that the Moscow underground was the first and only subway in the world.

It Gets Us, Too

And if it is asked how a people so sceptical of propaganda may yet be induced to believe innumerable lies, let us think a moment about some of our own beliefs. Even in the sphere of the practical and the concrete it was quite impossible for the ordinary American to believe that the British Mosquito bomber was faster than any American fighter (which, for a time, it was), simply because he was conditioned into believing in American technical superiority.

Similarly, it was quite impossible for the ordinary Englishman to believe that the United States Navy was displaying greater adaptability and resource than the Royal Navy (which, in certain theatres, it did), simply because he was conditioned into regarding the Royal Navy as the quintessence of adaptability and resource.

When it comes to such abstractions as democracy and freedom we are all of us more conditioned than we know—and this without any deliberate and conscious effort on the part of our Governments to indoctrinate us.

The Soviet Government makes that deliberate and conscious effort, and thus it is that a people sceptical to the point of ribaldry about any official government announcement (and that goes also for the announcements of foreign governments!) yet swallow with the air they breathe the ideas that the Kremlin wants them to swallow, so long as these ideas are not formulated as the pronouncements of any official body. And they are often terrible ideas.

Already we see that the containing barrier, as distinct from the excluding barrier, though impalpable, is a formidable affair. It is so strong that the ordinary Russian never looks beyond it.

I remember once talking to a Russian who was not an enthusiast for the régime and vividly aware that outside the frontier there was a life worth looking at. I was due to fly home from Moscow any day and I remember saying, rather cruelly, I fear, how bitter it must be for him to see me step into an aeroplane and fly away to another world—London in less than a day and a night!—while he was tied forever.

He would have given ten years of his life to go to London, I knew very well; but the thought of my freedom gave him no pang. There was no beating against the bars in vain. The very idea of his flying away out of Russia was so utterly remote that it simply did not register. He worried no more about his inability to do so than the hotel porter worries because he can't have the millionaire's suite. The idea simply does not cross his mind. He worries about things nearer home, such as the next wage rise and the delays of promotion to head porter.

Power Over Peasants

There is your real Iron Curtain—the conditioning of an educated, cosmopolitan-minded human being into unquestioning and more or less painless acceptance of an intolerable state of affairs.

And if the Kremlin can do that to a highly civilized and critical intellectual, its power over the minds and souls of the illiterate peasants driven into the factories and taught to read so that they may read the proper books and only the proper books must surely approach the absolute.

The most spectacular proof of the conscious will of the Soviet Government to segregate Russians from all other peoples (I say the will, as distinct from an instinctive inherited tendency, since authority in Russia, for good historical reasons, has always shown Tibetan characteristics ever since it emerged from the Mongolian occupation in the fifteenth century) was the appalling decree of March, 1947, which forbade any Soviet citizen to marry a foreigner.

Until the promulgation of that decree it was possible to pretend that the Soviet Government did not in fact frown in principle on the free association of its subjects with foreigners: that is to say, for the refusal of this visa, for the expulsion of that official, it was always possible to invent particular reasons.

But the decree forbidding all union with foreigners gives the game away. It takes us right out of modern civilization and back to virtually prehistoric times. To find its parallel today you would have to search the lesser-known cultures of Melanesia. It is barbaric.

No doubt there is something to be said for barbarism. If the Soviet leaders said, "We are barbarians and proud of it: we spit on your effete civilization," it would be possible to respect them. But they do not.

Instead, in their uncouth prose, they mumble from morning to night about the uniqueness of Soviet culture. . . . There may be something to be said for protecting the backward and all too impressionable Russians from corruption by the outside world. In fact, there is a good deal to be said, bearing all the circumstances in mind.

But there is nothing whatsoever to be said for lying in the Vishinsky manner and denying that any such insulation is effected.

Let Vishinsky explain why foreigners are kept out of Russia. Let him explain why Russians are kept at home. Let him explain why those foreigners who for diplomatic and official reasons have to be admitted to the Soviet paradise are treated like spies and saboteurs, restricted in their movements, followed by secret police and informed on by their Russian servants, while Russian visitors to England and America might roam as freely as they pleased if the Soviet Embassies permitted.

Let him explain why no Russian dares mix with foreigners either at home or abroad. Let him explain why the new official secrets act of 1947 makes it a penal offence for any Russian to divulge any information whatsoever to a foreigner—even the size of his local harvest.

Let him explain why foreign journalists are hamstrung by censorship and travel restrictions, why it is impossible to get accurate figures about production, about the armed forces, about the cost of living in the U.S.S.R., about the number of prisoners held by the M.V.D., about the size of the Soviet police forces. . . .

Cooped Up in Moscow

And if he replies that all these things are due to the present crisis, then let him explain why they existed during the war. Then America and Britain were pouring into Russia weapons and technical aid of every kind which they badly needed themselves, and Soviet missions of soldiers, sailors, airmen and technicians were given the run of a thousand secret plants and installations. But, in Russia itself, one small British and one small American mission, sent to co-operate with the Red Army, were together cooped up in Moscow and told virtually nothing at all.

Let Vishinsky explain why the people of Russia, grimly slogging at their terrible war and desperately needing encouragement and moral support, were told practically nothing of the help that came from outside and of the battles fought on other fronts.

Let him explain why today the people of Russia, still desperately needing a sense of solidarity with the rest of the world, are told that the West is a bankrupt hell of human slavery while all the fruits of its vitality and inventiveness—from scientific agriculture to the wireless and the electric light—are Russian inventions suppressed by the Tsars and stolen by Western capital.

Mr. Vishinsky could probably explain these things; but he could not explain them away, for they exist. And while they exist the Iron Curtain is in being—the barrier which has now moved forward into the heart of Europe.

Sign of Weakness

Mr. Vishinsky can have only one reason for denying the existence of that barrier, and we should blame ourselves for not perceiving that reason: it is a sign of terrible weakness.

Seen as an *excluding* barrier, its existence points to the imperative necessity of concealing from the outside world the rottenness of many aspects of the Stalin régime. Seen as a *containing* barrier, it indicates the continued uncertainty of the Kremlin's grip on its weary masses and on the subject peoples outside the U.S.S.R.

To conceal that weakness and to strengthen that grip, the men who rule the Soviet Union will commit any crime against the individual and will tell any lie.

The tragedy is that, given the Marxist ideology, there is a very strong case, if only one based on expediency, for much of the Kremlin's behaviour, while yet more of this behaviour is firmly based in the national character as moulded by history.

The real offence of Mr. Vishinsky is that he forbids all sympathetic consideration of that case.

DOWN IN THE FOREST PROGRESS STIRS...

. . . But some people are laying snares for the plan to "modernize" it.

Feudalism dies hard in the New Forest • *by HARRY HOPKINS*

THIS, PERHAPS, could only happen in Britain. In the midst of rushing through massive measures that may revolutionize our lives, Parliament is finding time to spring-clean a corner of still-surviving feudalism.

In the New Forest Bill it is trying to modernize the museum-piece government of a considerable slice of rural England.

Perhaps it is strange that the New Forest survives at all: 93,000 acres of unfenced woodland, heath and pasture in this highly industrialized little island.

Recorded in the Domesday Book, the New Forest was brought into being to provide a haunt for Royal red deer—a large unenclosed area over which our kings could enjoy the exhilaration of the chase. Two of them, William the Conqueror's sons, Rufus and William, died violent deaths doing so.

The deer went in 1851 with the Deer Removal Act. But, walking through those silent, empty miles, as forest opens up into heath and heath gives way to common, you can still get the feel of the older England—England before the machines came.

To the "gentlemen, yeomen and labourers" of the place, however, the Forest is much more than a romantic link with the past. For two-thirds of the two thousand-odd Commoners, the Forest is a principal source of income. Over seven hundred of them are "little men," holding less than five acres.

Many families in the New Forest live in what have been officially described as Stone Age conditions

Vitamin Unknown

The Commoners' right to graze animals on the Forest is valuable. Says one of them: "I can keep as many cattle on a smallholding in the Forest as on fifty acres in the Midlands." Some attribute this to a mysterious vitamin content in the undergrowth. However that may be, the fact remains that the Forest is a very healthy place for animals.

It is with the Court of Verderers that traditionalism reaches its peak. The Verderers are the "government" of the Forest, and there are seven of them. There is an "Official Verderer" selected by the Crown, and six Verderers elected by the Commoners and Parliamentary voters of the area by open voting in the Verderer's Hall of the King's House at Lyndhurst.

That's the theory. The fact is that, in seventy years, elections have been contested only twice and on neither occasion were they effective in introducing fresh blood. The property qualifications of a Verderer are so high that in the whole of Hampshire only sixteen people—including women—are eligible.

The members of this strange feudal relic hold sway over the 150 square miles of the Forest. Every Verderer is by virtue of his office a J.P. and member of the Court of Swainmote, which ranks as a court of Petty Sessions.

To assist them in enforcing the Forest laws and bringing malefactors to justice, the Verderers have their Agisters. The ordinary police have no powers to enforce the by-laws in the Forest.

In 1946 around 4,200 animals were grazing in the Forest—more than at any time in the last twenty years. They included 775 horses, 3,082 cattle and seventy-seven donkeys.

But it is the stocky little ponies that are the trademark of the Forest, as they wander at will over its vast area, over the roads, and even into the village streets (although their owners may be fined if they're found there).

Like its ponies, the New Forest has remained untamed through the centuries, holding progress ever at arm's length. Any attempt to change an inch of it has closed the ranks of the Hampshire "gentlemen, yeomen and labourers," who have fought a running battle against all invaders. First it was the Crown; then it was the State; now it's the public.

Even in the New Forest, time has not stood still.

In 1850 the railway came to the Forest. It was made to take a long detour; it was made to get a Special Act. But it came.

The motor car succeeded the horse and—though it has still not been settled whether or not they are legal—trunk roads were pushed through the glades which had before heard only the sound of wild things and the huntsman's horn. Soon they heard not only the throb of motor cars, but the hum of telegraph lines also.

The Drivers Paid

As motor speeds crept up, the Forest ponies, inquisitive, wandering creatures, were a frequent cause of accidents. And, until recently, it was the crashed car drivers who paid the compensation—to the injured animal's owners. For the animals were held to have the prior right to the road. They belonged to the Forest. The motorists didn't.

It wasn't only alien motorists who suffered. The village cricket teams found that to carve even the length of a permanent pitch from the 93,000 acres of Forest would constitute a "purpresture" or an "enclosure"—in those parts the gravest crime in the calendar.

Six hundred people live in the Forest in tumbledown shanties of old boards and tarpaulins. Some of them found refuge here during the depression between wars; others were bombed-out; other families had led a roaming life in the Forest for centuries until, in 1926, not possessing the inalienable rights enjoyed by the animals, they were confined to seven compounds.

In a Britain built on social security these people live in what were recently officially described as "Stone Age conditions." Their hovels are without floors, sanitation, windows, water supply or doors, for, undoubtedly, these things would constitute the most serious "enclosures."

How about New Forest timber and Britain's urgent needs? Fully stocked, says the Forestry Commission, the New Forest would provide one million cubic feet of timber a year. But the Forest cannot be fully stocked because of restrictive Forest laws.

How about animals? It has been estimated that the Forest could feed twice the present number of animals.

How about food? Though the soil is acid, the Ministry of Agriculture would like to have the chance of growing food crops on 3,000 acres—which could finally be turned back to the animals with their grazing improved.

It is not only for material sustenance that the nation looks to the New Forest today. To millions cooped in the racket and petrol-reek of great cities its ever-changing beauty, its wide open spaces offer a renewal of body and mind.

This is the truest sense in which the Forest can be called our national heritage. Fortunately, its new managers, the Forestry Commission, have recognized that fact by establishing an "Amenity Circle" in which the ancient woods are protected and regenerated.

There have been proposals that several permanent camping sites and a swimming place should be provided.

In 1946 the Baker Committee was appointed to recommend "measures for adjusting the Forest to modern requirements."

The present Bill is based on its report. It "democratizes" the Court of Verderers, widens the interests represented, and permits the enclosing of further acres for timber, crops, playing fields and ornamental woods.

Plea to the Lords

And once again the call to arms is ringing through the Forest glades. The Hampshire gentry have organized petitions against the Bill, and are employing counsel to present their case before the Select Committee of the House of Lords to which the Bill has been referred after its second reading.

The "rebels" assert that, though the Verderers are kept in being, no adequate finance is provided for them; they will have to depend on rents from the State's new enclosures. The Bill, they say, is a plot to deliver Hampshire free men into the bondage of the Forestry Commission.

More detached observers may agree with the Lord Chancellor who, when speaking on the Bill in the Lords, apologized for the inevitable gradualness which, while modifying the old fuedal forms, still carefully preserved them.

History-conscious as they are, there is one item in our island story it would be well for the Hampshire "gentlemen, yeomen and labourers" to remember. It concerns the king from whom many of their rights and privileges are derived, King Canute. Even King Canute, remember, couldn't hold back the tide.

A FRIEND IN NEED

by ***DUDLEY BARKER***

ILLUSTRATED BY SHOWELL

ALL THREE WERE SITTING on deck-chairs in the garden. George was looking tired, and Marjorie thought he was making an effort to seem his usual calm self. Dear George, he worked too hard at that damn bank.

"Money, money, that's all she talks about," said George, banteringly.

"It's the cost of everything these days, George darling," she replied lazily. The sun was warm on her body. Seen through her half-closed eyes, George's hollyhocks were long strips of colour, and the neighbour's ramblers were rioting over the wooden fence. Her Sealyham dog, Scatters, lay dozing on the grass, now and then jerking his back paws or twitching his nose in his dreams.

"Do you know," she demanded, "how much it cost me yesterday to buy four and a half yards of dress material? Very nearly nine pounds ten."

"Take my tip, Hubert," said George. "Never get married."

"No chance of that," declared Hubert. "You asked her first."

"What a nice friend you have, George. Always says exactly the right thing."

Not, of course, that it was true. That sort of remark can be made, she reflected, only if quite false; or it would be pointless, no joke in it. She glanced idly at the two men relaxed in their chairs. It was George for her all right, even if his muscles had sagged a little. He was such a mature person, such a man. Hubert was well enough in his way, a pleasant friend, George's friend, but she didn't much care for him.

And then, of course, she wondered if there was, after all, any truth in what he had said. Had he ever wanted her? If George had not been there, would he have made up to her? No, of course not. Not Hubert.

Hubert was just musing the very same thing. She was attractive enough, if a little plump, and she kept old George's home very nicely and all that. But not for him. Oh dear no! He thought comfortably of his small flat, his books, his little personal luxuries and indulgences, the cosy portfolio of investments in the strongroom at his bank. He pulled out his tobacco pouch and appreciatively lit his pipe.

"I suppose," said Marjorie, without stirring, "I shall have to go and get some tea for you two energetic gardeners."

JUST AT that moment Scatters leaped from his dreams and raced towards the house, barking.

"Someone at the door," grumbled Marjorie. "All right, I'll go. I've got to put the kettle on anyway."

A couple of minutes later she came to the french windows and called: "Two men to see you, George. I've put them in the dining-room."

Her husband glanced for a moment at the back fence, then rose wearily. "Very well," he said.

"Don't be long, darling. Tea will be ready."

Left alone in the small back garden, Hubert continued to smoke his pipe contentedly. In some ways old George was a lucky fellow. Everything a bit humdrum, of course, but George never had been one for excitements.

Hubert really believed that George had not changed—fundamentally, that is—since they had first been at school together. George had not been much of a scholar, nor of an athlete; just a simple, easy-going chap.

It was the same during the war. George had gone through it without much dash—respectable infantry record,

"We must destroy the receipts," cried Marjorie. Hubert gripped her wrists. "You can't do that," he said

then a tour on the staff—always philosophical, good-humoured.

How fond he was, he reflected, of old George. Marjorie he did not so much care about.

She came out then with the tea on a tray, which she set down upon the low rustic table. It was such a lovely afternoon that similar trays were emerging into the back gardens all along the row, and husbands, crumbling from their fingers the soil of Saturday afternoon weeding, remarked to their spouses: "Ah, good! A cup of tea!"

Hubert and Marjorie sat waiting for George with growing impatience. Why on earth, she grumbled, had George to choose Saturday afternoon for business? Were they business friends? Well, she supposed so. Rather odd-looking characters, really. They couldn't be men from the football pools, could they, come to tell George he had won £60,000? "Not on a Saturday afternoon in summer, old thing," replied Hubert.

"Oh, gracious! He's bringing them out into the garden," she protested. "I shall have to go and get some more cups."

But George checked her as she rose. He looked grave.

"I have bad news, Marjorie, and you must brace yourself to hear it. These gentlemen are police officers."

"Has there been an accident?"

"No, my dear, just a mistake. You must believe that there is no need to worry. There has been an unfortunate mistake, that's all, and I must go along with these officers to look into it. A sum of money is missing from the bank."

"Missing? But who has taken it, George?"

"They say that I have. I am being accused of embezzlement, Marjorie. Do you understand what that means?"

"But that's absurd," she cried, looking round wildly.

Hubert, who had risen in consternation from his chair, gripped her gently by the arms.

"Steady on now, old girl. Don't be alarmed. Everything will soon be straightened out."

GEORGE glanced at him gratefully. Then, clearing his throat, said: "Er, Marjorie, I shall have to be away for the night. Would you please go upstairs and pack me a bag?"

"Have you been arrested?" Hubert burst out, unthinkingly.

George nodded gravely. For a moment Hubert thought Marjorie would throw a fit of hysterics. But she suddenly shuddered, gazed stiffly at the police officers, and went into the house without another word.

"While we're waiting, Inspector," suggested George, "perhaps we could have a cup of tea."

The inspector solemnly assented, and George poured out three cups—Hubert motioned that he didn't want any. The two police officers placed their bowler hats on the lawn, accepted the cups, and sipped genteelly. Hubert passed round cigarettes, and George sucked the smoke hungrily into his lungs. On the other side of the fence their neighbour's children began a game of French cricket, shouting and laughing.

"You must help me, Hubert," said George hurriedly. "Get hold of my solicitor — you know him, young Crabshaw—and send him round to the station. And for heaven's sake look after Marjorie, won't you?"

Hubert promised. "It's going to be all right, isn't it George?" he asked meaningly.

"Let's hope so."

Upstairs in the pink bedroom, with the flowered silk counterpane, and the water-colours in gilt frames upon the wall, Marjorie was mechanically packing a bag. She was not weeping yet.

As Hubert approached the house on Monday evening he noticed with annoyance that a little group of children was gathered near the front gate, and he was conscious of eyes peering from behind the curtains of neighbouring windows. He thought of shooing the children away, but decided it was useless.

MARJORIE took him into the dining-room, where the table was stacked with neat piles of letters and bills. He wondered what all that was for, but refrained from asking. They sat down opposite each other in the art-leather armchairs. Hubert noted with approval that Marjorie had on her best dress and had made up her face with particular care. Morale, that was the thing.

He gave her a calm account of proceedings at the magistrates' court. Not that there was much to tell — just evidence of arrest and a formal remand. Bail refused. "That was cruel," he said. "I don't understand it."

"Do you believe he is innocent?"

"Of course."

"Truly?" she demanded, gazing at him solemnly.

He paused a moment. "My dear Marjorie, how can I possibly tell? I can't imagine George doing anything dishonourable, let alone dishonest. That's all I know."

Suddenly she broke down. She had not wept, he thought, till then. He went across and put his arm round her shoulders.

She pressed her face into his jacket and wept aloud. It was horrible, but he realized it had better go on. Her body shook. The sobbing seemed to tear her whole personality into shreds, to disintegrate her very being into misery.

When she lifted her face, mascara was running down her cheeks, and her lipstick was smudged.

At last he murmured soothingly to her, offering her a comfortably large white handkerchief. Scatters, the dog, who had been watching uneasily, crept forwards and thrust his nose into her hand. She tugged his ears.

"It was my fault, Hubert," she wailed.

He told her that was nonsense, but she pointed at the papers stacked on the table.

"I've put them all out, all the bills and receipts for the last year. George always kept them so neatly. That's what we have spent, Hubert. Mostly it's what I have spent. Do something for me. Go through them. See how much it all comes to. I've tried to do it myself, but I'm a fool, and get muddled."

He thought of telling her it would do no good, but, of course, he knew what she was after. Had she spent more than George had earned?

"I have got to know, Hubert," she pleaded.

So he rose and went to the table, scanning the bills, jotting down the totals. As he went on, his heart sank. He tried to avoid her eyes when he looked up, fixing his gaze on the mantelpiece clock, or on the steel engraving of Dante meeting Beatrice on the dark blue wallpaper.

But when he had finished, and put down his pencil, he had to face her.

"I'm afraid the household has been a little extravagant," he murmured, trying to choose friendly words; in reality, he was appalled at the total.

"Then it is my fault," she cried, tears flooding again into her smudged eyes. "Oh, why didn't he tell me? Why didn't he stop me in time?"

"Didn't he try?" asked Hubert.

"Not really, Hubert. He didn't, not really. He said we must go steady and all that, but I never knew. . . . Things cost so much. . . . Oh, what can I do?"

She flung herself on to the side of the chair and sobbed violently once more. He regarded her in silence. There was nothing to say. He looked at the twisted curve of her body, suffering and miserable, and felt a strong impulse to comfort her.

What could he do? The whole wretched story was now only too plain.

Poor old George. And yet he found himself growing angry with George. What pathetic weakness, to allow this woman, without even much of a protest, to waste his sustenance and at last drag him into a crime. Surely there had been some moment when he could have told her, could have prevented her, brutally if need be.

Hubert would never have allowed it if she had been his wife. He would have—what would he have done? He realized how far all this was out of his depth. Could he have withstood the temptation of her, if he had been in George's place? Could he have resisted? He looked at her again, then sighed. The truth was, he didn't know.

SUDDENLY she stopped weeping, sat up and announced: "We must destroy those receipts."

"But whatever for?"

"They'll incriminate him. They'll prove a motive."

She rushed across the room and picked up the papers. Quickly he gripped her wrists.

"My dear girl, you can't do that. It wouldn't be honest."

"Honest!" she screamed at him. "What do I care for honesty? Let go of me. All I care for is George, and I'll fight for him. Let go of me, will you? You, his friend! Fine friend you are. George may go to prison, and all you talk about is honesty. Let go of my hands, damn you."

The struggle pulled him to his feet. He held on firmly as she pulled and writhed at him, even attempting to duck her head and bite his knuckles. He held on until she quietened; then dropped her into the chair.

"You're acting like a fool, Marjorie. Even if you did destroy them, it would do no good. There would be other records."

"Get out," she whispered, crouching in the chair. "Get out. Go away. I loathe you."

He stood still for a moment, then shrugged. "As you wish," he said.

In the morning, of course, she telephoned, apologized, begged him to forgive her, pleaded with him to come and see her again. She added that she had not destroyed the papers.

So, when his day's work was done, he went round again to the house, and she was very penitent and polite, and they discussed the whole affair with great calm.

From then on, it was Hubert who took command of the business, who held conferences with Crabshaw, the solicitor, arranged for the briefing of a barrister (and paid for him, too), and accompanied Marjorie when she visited George in prison; a horrible experience, this last, though both Marjorie and George behaved well.

But that night Marjorie got out the gin bottle, and when Hubert arrived at the house she was three-parts drunk. She was in a mood of macabre gaiety, quite confident that George would soon be released, mocking at the neighbours whose unspoken sneers had so wounded her, even growing a little amorous towards Hubert himself.

He made no attempt to reprove her that night, but next morning he spoke very seriously to her on the telephone. And Marjorie, deeply ashamed of her indulgence (to say nothing of the headache it had given her) promised him solemnly never again to look for a way out in that direction.

"Oh, I won't Hubert," she said. "But somehow, yesterday, seeing poor George in that dreadful place. . . ."

"I know, old dear," he replied soothingly. "But, all the same, it won't do."

HUBERT, who had never before been remotely connected with criminal proceedings, found that the worst of all to bear was their tedium. The thing dragged on so.

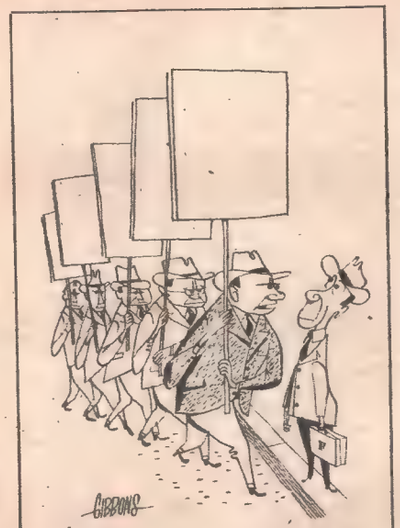
First, the hearings before the magistrate, with a week's interval between each. Then the committal for trial, and the interminable wait before the trial itself began. The long conferences with lawyers, the reading of documents, the dull ache of suspense. And all that time he had Marjorie to handle, to keep in contact with life, to prevent from gazing at the future. He himself did not dare to think what her future could be.

But at last the trial came on. It lasted for three days. On the first two, Hubert took Marjorie to the court, sat silently beside her while the case rolled inexorably on. Again, its slowness was the test—the deliberation of counsel between each question, the maddening pauses as the judge wrote down the evidence, the careful reading of documents—as though the thing being discussed were quite inhuman, some academic controversy, having nothing to do with the torture of a human soul.

And through all this, whenever he dared raise his eyes, he could see George, sitting impassive in the dock.

The thing was so unreal that he found himself following it with the same sort of detached interest with which he would

Placidly Marjorie and Hubert sized each other up, both wondering: ". . . but for George." Still, good, stolid old George was the right man in the right place. Then came a surprise visit



"We are so furious, words fail us"

have watched a play; until he glanced sideways at the tense, nervous figure of Marjorie.

He was dreading the last day. But early in the morning she telephoned to him. In a strained voice she said she could not face the courtroom again.

He told her she was wise. George, he felt sure, would prefer her not to be there. She said he ought to go, but he replied that he would come round to be with her. He would telephone Crabshaw and tell him to inform George, who would not like her to be left alone.

So Hubert hurried round to the house, and together they began that long day.

She had made a big jug of coffee, and by drinking that, and keeping off the one subject, they got through the first hour or so. She was forcing herself to be normal, to make a pretence of doing some housework.

But they both knew this make-believe could not last very long. It was as though some force, which they were powerless to resist, were compelling them to the moment when, having exhausted all else, they would be sitting opposite each other, talking of George.

They arrived at this moment, at about noon, in the sitting-room, among all the little gew-gaws of the house—the simpering photograph of Marjorie upon the piano, the wedding-present vases, the chintz covers of the furniture, the radio by which George would sit of an evening to listen to his music, the lamp with the pink shade sheltering a china shepherdess.

Marjorie sat on the sofa. "Hubert," she said, "I have got to have a drink."

"Of course, old thing."

He went to the corner cupboard where George kept his liquor. How many times, of a Sunday morning, George had gone to that cupboard, and they had all been laughing and talking. He poured out two stiff ones, gave her one, and settled into an armchair with the other.

Then at last Marjorie began to talk. She talked of George, rapidly, feverishly, without reserve. It was as though at the close of a chapter, she was compelled to tell the whole story, stripping away all pretences.

"And through all this you have been so grand to me, Hubert, so kind and tolerant. I couldn't have got through it without you," she said, holding out her hand to him.

He crossed to the sofa and sat beside her, patting the hand gently. "You have been terribly brave about it, old girl," he said.

She burst into tears. With a wail she thrust her head upon his shoulder. He put his arm around her, to comfort her, himself uncomfortably aware of her closeness. She sobbed pitifully.

He was distressed, a little alarmed. She was as unpredictable, in this taut mood, as a wounded animal. He no longer understood her. This was not the woman he knew, but a strange, wild creature of impulses he could neither foretell nor comprehend.

Next moment she stopped sobbing, flung herself on to him, arm around his neck, her face groping upwards for his. Taken by surprise, he could not resist. They clung together. Then he struggled free, shook her off, scrambled angrily to his feet.

The dog, alarmed at the tumult, rushed snapping and growling at him. Hubert swung his foot and kicked the animal clear. It fled with a yelp under one of the chairs.

"Oh, Hubert! How could you?" she cried.

He straightened and calmed himself. "I think I had better go, Marjorie."

That plunged her into weeping again. She sobbed that, if he left her now, there would be nothing in the world for her. Glaring round wildly, she swore she would do away with herself.

Hubert hesitated, then leant over her. All right, he said, but they must be sensible, mustn't they, old thing? Yes, yes, she agreed, clutching at his arm, but he mustn't leave her alone, not now.

He dropped down beside her again. Oh, Hubert!" she wailed. "Don't leave me. I can't stand any more, Hubert darling."

Her sobbing died away and the house fell silent—silent as the little china shepherdess under her pink lampshade, silent as the smiling photograph in its artistic frame upon the piano.

What broke this silence was the telephone bell, calling insistently and plaintively from its nook behind the coats in the hall.

Hubert rose wearily from the sofa and went into the hall to answer it.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Crabshaw," he said. Then, after a pause: "I'll tell her, yes, Mr. Crabshaw. Appeal? Oh, of course, if you think so. Yes, she's here. I'll tell her."

He replaced the telephone and stood staring through the window at the ragged patch of front garden.

"Three years," he muttered.

Behind him, he could hear the quiet sobbing of the woman on the sofa.

"Not only your sentence, George," he said sadly to himself. "Mine too, old fellow, mine too."

THE HUMAN MACHINE

A Kick Out Of Life

MOST human beings are irrational, inconsistent, fallible. That is not a great discovery. It's just a fact. We can all try to be more rational, more consistent, less fallible. That's another fact.

Once we really understand the first and honestly try to achieve the second, we can develop into reasonable and likeable individuals.

If we were all perfect we wouldn't be human beings. We should be robots, inhabiting a mechanical world from which the joy of living would be banished.

Our two main responsibilities as people are to be happy and to try to make others happy. It's very easy to fool ourselves into believing that worry and unhappiness are virtues.

We're all in danger of becoming much too serious. We should constantly ask ourselves, "How can I enjoy life?"

by ROFFE THOMPSON

LETTER FROM NEW YORK

Perhaps life in the United States isn't all *that* wonderful, after all. *CLAUD MORRIS* here describes his personal reactions as a visitor

NEW YORK.

DEAR JACK,—This letter is by way of keeping the promise I made on a damp December morning in London—just a few weeks back—when you helped me into a cab outside that block of flats where I live and you work.

"Let me know if they need any ex-Cockney doormen over in New York," you said, as the cab started off for Waterloo. "Write and tell me when to start packing. I could do with some of those steaks."

Well, Jack, when I asked the porter who carried my bags off the *Queen Elizabeth* what it felt like to be living in the land of beefsteaks, he dropped them.

"You kiddin', Mister?" he asked. "Say, I ain't seen a steak in six months. I got kids to feed. I'm like a lot of guys in this town—already living on next week's pay."

Not Hollywood's Picture

This city of ham'n eggs an' hamburger is certainly not what Hollywood told me about on the screen of my local cinema. It is certainly like nothing that many of the *Queen Elizabeth's* 2,009 passengers expected. It's certainly going to cause a wet eye or two among some of the eager emigrants who grumbled to me from the Bishop's Rock to Nantucket lightship about the misery of living in Battersea, Balham, Tooting and Manchester, as compared to the anticipated heaven of the Bronx, Yonkers and Manhattan.

The first time I realized there was something wrong with the Promised Land was on the ship coming over.

I was sitting in the cabin of Captain Grattidge, relief captain of the *Elizabeth*. He has been a man of two worlds all his life, criss-crossing the Atlantic for Cunard. He loves New York—as a man falls in love with a beautiful wild-eyed girl, who has plenty of zip but very little character. But the captain *lives* in London—for quiet, peace and comradeship, and the fact that there a shilling still buys something you can take home.

At the captain's table on this huge town of a ship usually sit film stars, industrialists, notables and American businessmen. They are, I regret to say, mostly the kind of people who have maddened us stay-at-homes by flipping in and out of England during the past few years, giving us all the once-over, and usually proclaiming in loud type that we are behind the times, down and out, poorly fed, enmeshed in red tape.

Occasionally, maybe, a bit of truth is spoken. But normally what these Atlantic birds of passage mean is that they can better live their kind of "Keep the change," and "Caviar, please" life on the other side of the herring pond.

Recently, however, Captain Grattidge has noticed a subtle difference of opinions. "You know," said one Yankee industrialist to him, "I am surprised to have to admit that in engineering factories I have visited in Birmingham the men's output is a good deal better than that of my own men in Milwaukee."

At table during our trip an American said: "One thing that amazes me about Britain is that you see so few beggars around."

I thought of that remark, Jack, when on my first day in New York I was stopped three times by shuffling men. "Spare me a dime for a cup of coffee, Mister?"

Frankly, this trip has made me conscious of the fact that in many ways Britain is a better-run country than U.S.A. In some ways we *are* more efficient.

I came here with two questions in my mind. "Are we so badly off compared with America?" And "Can the Yanks teach us anything?"

They certainly cannot teach us a great deal in working efficiency. The average working man and trade unionist here is fiercely resentful of the high cost of living. His resentment often takes the form of slow-downs, strikes, and what the American bosses call "feather bedding," or insisting that two men are needed to do what is often one man's work.

The average American is today working longer hours, yes. But he works a good deal more slowly, except when aided by machine power and mass production. As an example of normal "slowness," take the customs. To handle passengers on the *Queen Elizabeth* it takes twice as many customs officials in New York as in Southampton.

And I would say that American Government officials are less alert and have less initiative. On the dockside they flaunt a maddening, gum-chewing leisureliness, constantly consulting "higher ups."

Men With a Grouse

Low-paid manual labour, like the porters at the dock, are less helpful than in most countries. They have the look of men with a grouse. In spite of the no-tipping rule, they grumble at anything less than a dollar for wheeling a couple of cases out of a shed.

You can understand that. These fellows are poorly paid when you realize that most of the wonderful things in New York shops are out of reach of their pockets.

Efficiency? I leaped into a taxi-cab. Most of the cabs here, in this country of mass production, are shabby. They

City of skyscrapers? City of tenement houses, too. Woman hanging out washing (left) may pay at least £3 a week rent

are not mechanically fit. In London over the last three years I cannot remember once hiring a taxi which broke down. In New York in a week I took two which conked out half-way to my destination.

No. 1 driver swung around at me. "Carburetter trouble," he said. "I wonder people jump in a heap of junk like mine. Say, bud, do ya mind changing?"

No. 2 man skidded fifteen feet on ice past a red light. "Gee, ma' brakes are gone, fella," he said.

I leapt out again.

The rest of the transport system is poor by any standards. The underground system in Moscow, for instance (and this is a comparison which would infuriate the New Yorker), is clean, efficient and fast compared to New York's subway. London Transport has all the marks of the modern age compared with the clanking, groaning, fuming stink boxes which shoot beneath Manhattan streets.

New Yorkers who drive their own cars find that parking costs an average of 7s. 6d. for twelve hours. One woman told me it cost her $12 a week, or £3, just to park her car by day while she went to work.

Buses, too, are fussy by any British standards. The trigger-tempered man at the door both drives and takes cash, an annoying performance which makes him stop longer than necessary at each fare stage. There are no tickets. In rush hours a good deal of cheating is possible, because there is no real check on how much cash goes in the box.

In business offices men and women work longer than in equivalent offices in Britain, some of them 8.30 a.m. to six at night, many sparing only thirty minutes for lunch. All young business fellows appear to nurse an ulcer from fast swallowing. But the actual work is less intense, and at a slower pace than one would suppose. People swing by, looking busy, important and often agitated. Endless conferences precede every bit of real action.

Strain Tells on Them

A New York doctor said to me: "People die young here." It is true that I have not for a long time seen so many men of from fifty to sixty, mostly business executives, looking physically tired and with that burnt-candle look about the eyes through the strain of chasing the mighty buck.

An office man's lunch, in this year of plenty, 1949, is taken at a milk bar or a soda fountain, and on the average consists of a cup of coffee and a ham sandwich. No soup, no fish, no meat, no sweet. That is not surprising, as the cup of coffee and sandwich cost fifty cents, or half a crown.

The smallest services cost what to English eyes is a good deal of money. I left a suitcase at Grand Central Station. The charge was fifteen cents (6d.). Plus tip it cost me nearly a shilling. "Hasn't 'that gone up?" I asked the man, remembering that a week ago I paid ten cents for the same service. "Yah," he said. "You tell me, Bud, somethin' that *hasn't* gone up in price around here."

The average family income in New York today (official figure) is $1,300 a year, or about £6 10s. a week. You can see what this means when I tell you what a public relief administrator, Mr. Levine, told me. "The lowest living wage on which a family can exist, without eating out, or consuming any but cheap food, is $1,800 a year, or about £9 a week."

In the mayor's office of New York city I was told there were nearly a million families who need another £2 10s. a week in order to keep up a proper level of nutriment and good health. In a frantic fight to relieve distress among people who literally cannot afford to live, there are now twelve Government loan agencies at work.

The American, who is the first to recognize and respect and sympathize with the rights of the individual, neglects the conditions of a crowd.

Here is an instance: For three recent months, until the cold snap, New Yorkers enjoyed a mild winter. People did not need much heat or coal. As a result, 50,000 miners in Pennsylvania were temporarily "laid off" work. Nobody seemed to mind.

I have no doubt that a single one of these miners, hungry and cold, could always extract a "buck" from a kindly American—probably the most charitable, warmhearted person in the world today. But tell that same American that 50,000 miners need help from the Government, or that mine owners should not be allowed to treat men like cattle, and he may cry, "Government interference!"

Listen to the words of a man I have just been listening to. He said: "Tens of millions in this country lack adequate medical care because they can't even begin to afford it. Five million people live in disgraceful slums. Old-age pensioners with no other means of living push along, or starve, on £5 a month. Minimum wages are far too low. Small businessmen are mostly completely handicapped and crippled. Millions of children are without adequate schools."

That man's name? Harry S. Truman, President of the United States.

The housewives' budgets over here would make many a woman in my part of England gasp in sympathy, not gape with envy. Certainly, we are miserably rationed for butter in Britain. Everybody knows that. But even the poorest families get it. Here few people in the lower and middle income groups ever have butter. Reason: the price is 5s. a pound. Eggs are 5s. a dozen.

Milk is 7d. a pint, and the price may vary according to the district in which you live (one of the "benefits" of no controls). Good sirloin meat is 4s. 6d. a pound. The cheapest vegetable on the market, the cauliflower, costs 1s. 9d. for what amounts to a few leaves. The average rent is running out today at about £3 a week for the worst type of flat in a poor district.

Snack Cost 6s. 6d.

Restaurant costs are phenomenal. I went to a "cheap" little soda fountain on 103rd Street and my hamburger and chips and coffee came to 5s. 6d. I then gave the minimum handout one can offer in this city of tip-hungry workers, 25 cents or about a shilling.

At the other end of the inflationary joyride, I took my girl to the "21" Restaurant, one of the most exclusive eating places in the city. We had a plate of liver and cauliflower, and a coffee, and a single drink. (Reminder: the British 2s. whisky nip costs, in New York, with ginger ale, the equivalent of 4s. a time.) Total bill for our lunch at the "21" came to £3 10s.

If we do have anything to learn from the Americans it is in the matter of their excellent conception of "service" in shops and restaurants, where the customer is always right, and there is no distinction between customers, so long as they produce the dough.

There are no "Sirs" here. There is less patronage and wire-pulling than in Europe, or even in Britain. Every fellow stands on his own feet. If he falls, it's just too bad.

But it is a pity that Americans have yet to learn to organize this land of theirs for the benefit of all, so that progress for the people at the top does not mean grinding poverty and bad conditions for millions at the bottom.

To sum up, this New York life is grand, if you have the cash to stand the pace and don't stop to ponder just where you are being blown.

Be Thankful for London

Well, Jack, what do you think? That's New York as I have found it—and I haven't pulled any punches because I think it is time that more people in Britain learned (as many hundreds of G.I. brides have learned here in the past three years) that America is not a land of streets lined with easy money.

I honestly don't know, Jack, what advice to give you about coming to New York for keeps. Some things you shouldn't forget. In London you get your pint of beer every night. You go to the pictures regularly. You don't live particularly well, but you don't live particularly badly, either. You have food and shelter and warmth.

I would say that for any ordinary man, with a family to keep, and children to give a decent education to, and with limited means to do it on—then the Britain that we know (quite apart from the Britain we can build in our generation) does, in fact, offer greater opportunity than the United States.

Yours,

CLAUD MORRIS.

GREEN GROW THE RUS

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY HERBERT

Suddenly Bainbridge was coming at them with a pitchfork. "Giddout!" he raved. "Go on, get off'n my land!" With as much dignity as they could muster, they ran. Behind him, Finch felt the sudden jab

INVESTIGATING THE low yield of farmers in the Liberty of Anderida marsh, three officials of the Ministry of Agriculture meet with an unfriendly reception.

Colonel Gill, chairman of the Liberty Corporation, tells Meg Cuffley, reporter and daughter of the editor of the *Anderida Post*, that the marshmen will not tolerate interference.

Meg is aware of some conspiracy, but cannot find out what it is. On a duck shoot with her father, she sees several mysterious punts with a cargo of barrels.

PART II

The Cargo Goes Ashore

THE punts moved up the Gutt towards Shive Bridge and, shooting the black arch with a thrust or two of the paddles, began the last lap of the journey to the canal and the ruined abbey. Rupert Hammond, stretched out on the boxes in the last of the three craft, opened his eyes and looked at the sky in the east. It would be light soon. He sat up suddenly with a sensation of alarm. They were late, dangerously late. He thought back, wondering what had so upset the routine. By this time they should have been well under cover.

"Better speed it up, Sam," he whispered.

They dug into the water and the punts began to move faster, the water slapping vigorously at the broad prows.

Two hundred yards short of the bridge beneath the main road they slid smoothly into the bank and came to rest in the rushes. Rupert Hammond jumped on to the turf and ran forward to the bridge. He lay in the moist grass close to the parapet and looked up and down the road. Nothing moved. Far away a dog barked. He raised his arm and the punts came silently towards him.

Then he saw Hewitt.

Hewitt was one of the customs men from Rye. There were three of them altogether, responsible for the harbour and the trawlers which came and went to and from the fishing beds, but it was Hewitt who looked after the seaboard from Rye to Portenoy.

Hammond knew him well. He lived near Portenoy and would sometimes cycle to and fro along the road, sometimes along the track at the base of the sea wall, calling on Urquhart, the coast-guard, whose eyrie stood on stilts a few hundred yards south of the old entrance to Portenoy harbour.

ONCE a petty officer in the Navy, Hewitt was a small, tidy man; he worried a good deal about his job, and his anxiety was writ large in the frown across his earnest face; he worried about the flotsam which rolled ashore from the Goodwins; he worried about the trawlers, knowing that all was well, yet still morally unable to forgo his right to search every vessel entering the harbour lest skipper or crew had somehow contrived to hide something dutiable. . . . Something dutiable, but whence obtained? And what? How? There was nothing to smuggle but the tossing grey waters of the English Channel. Hewitt worried notwithstanding.

Now he was pedalling slowly along the road to Rye.

Hammond drew in his breath sharply and looked over his shoulder. The laden punts were scarcely fifty yards from the bridge and in full view, even in the misty

SHES

So that was it. Smuggling! At last Meg had discovered the secret. But others were equally curious

by HOWARD CLEWES

grey light. Hewitt would pass over the bridge as they passed under it. He was almost certain to see them.

There was nothing to be done. Hammond slipped a few feet down the bank and clung to the earth. It was a long time before he heard the faint musical resonance of the air in the spokes of Hewitt's bicycle and the liquid purling of the tyres on the wet road. He held his breath. The grass left beads of dew on his face.

The whisper of the wheels died away slowly. He raised himself on his belly and peered round the parapet of the bridge. Hewitt was going away down the road and presently vanished in the mist. Hammond let out his breath, rose stiffly and crossed the road. He leapt into the last of the punts as it shot the bridge.

"Hewitt," he told Sam Everard, "—half asleep, thank heaven."

They moved swiftly to the canal.

It did not take long, once they had reached the head of the creek, to unload and stow the cases in the vaults. There were seven men, all strong and active. It was getting lighter with every minute, but the ruins of the abbey were invisible from the main road and the mist still clung to the water and the trees in its vicinity. When the work was done three of the men paddled the punts away to their nests in the reeds; the other three walked down the track which skirted the creek and set off in the direction of Portenoy.

Hammond was alone. He leaned against the wall and stretched luxuriously. From the abbey onwards the shifting of the cases was no longer his responsibility. He lit a cigarette and went into the crumbling outhouse which leaned against the wall and uncovered the little car. He started up the engine and drove slowly down the track towards the road.

As he was about to turn into the main road, Hammond remembered he had not blown out the hurricane lamp they had lit in the vaults while they carried in the night's shipment.

After backing the car in among the trees again he shut off the engine, jumped out and ran back up the track towards the ruins.

Anderida Abbey stood at the foot of the hills which had once formed the cliffs of Kent.

The vaults, even in dry weather, were several inches deep in water; moss trailed across the dripping walls, nameless fungi sprouted obscenely from the sodden mortar, and the curious sightseer, if indeed he dared to step at all into the apparently fathomless pools of water on the floor, rarely went farther into the pitchy darkness than the first arch, at which he would normally turn back with a bruised forehead.

Beyond the first arch, however, there was a small door. It was locked, and the lock, invisible from the outside, was relatively new.

On the other side of the door there were three or four stone steps leading up to a small closet or chamber which had been the leper's cell of the abbey. As a depository for the smuggled liquor it was ideal.

Hammond skirted the creek and made for the jagged wall which loomed out of the mist beyond the trees. He ran down the steps and splashed his way through the water on the floor to the first arch. He fumbled in his pockets for a match, lit one and, holding the flame above his head, crossed the floor towards the second arch and the tunnel.

The match burned his fingers and he dropped it. But the tunnel was narrow and he could feel his way to the end by stretching out his arms to the walls on either side. He lit another match.

Then he saw the small white face. He stopped and let his breath out sharply between his teeth. It would be hard to say who was the more startled of the two.

"Hallo," said Meg, shakily.

The match went out. Her heart thundered in her throat. She thought he must surely hear it, must sense it in the earth at their feet as one may feel the distant throb of an engine in the deckboards of a ship. Instinctively she raised the muzzle of her gun. Then he struck another match and raised it above his head and she saw his face. The man in the pub! And—yes—the man she had half recognized on one of the punts!

"The sailor," she said involuntarily.

Hammond seemed to consider her for a moment. The match fell and hissed faintly in the water at their feet.

MEG flattened herself against the wall in the darkness, flinching from God knew what—something live and unseen. Hammond's voice boomed in the tunnel.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?"

"I'm Meg Cuffley"—and, with a sudden flash of inspiration, "I'm a reporter on the *Anderida Post*."

"Cuffley."

He seemed to know the name.

"Yes," she said.

"Go on."

Desperately she groped for words. "I'm writing a series of articles on the old smugglers," she said. "They used to use the abbey, you know. . . ." Her voice trailed away; one did not document an article at six o'clock in the morning.

"I . . ."—she stopped again—"Couldn't we get out of this tunnel into the light?"

He struck another match. "You watched me come in here, didn't you?" he said softly. "And then waited till you thought I'd gone."

She did not reply.

"Well?" he said.

"Yes," she answered at last. "I saw you in the Marsh."

"Was it your gun I heard?"

"Yes," she lied.

The match went out. She heard him fumbling with the lock on the door. "You'd better see it all," he said, "now you're here."

The door swung open. She looked at the eyes beneath the shining black peak of the cap and suddenly knew it was going to be all right. He followed her up the steps.

"Perhaps I'd better take that gun," he said.

She handed it to him as the door swung to. He broke it and ejected the cartridges; then he squinted along the barrels, closed it and handed it back to her.

"Whose gun did you say I heard?" he asked her gently.

She moved her shoulders.

"Both your barrels are clean," he said.

"It was my father's."

"Where is he now?"

"Outside," she said, "waiting for me."

"You're a shocking bad liar, Meg," he said sadly. "However. . . ." He waved a hand towards the contents of the cell. "Is this what you wanted to see?"

She stared open-mouthed. The crates were marshalled one upon the other from floor to ceiling, all stacked neatly against the walls; there was space only in the middle of the floor.

"What's in them?" she asked breathlessly.

"Spirits. Brandy . . . some wine, some champagne." He watched the glowing face. She had forgotten her fear and the colour was flooding back to her cheeks.

"Contraband?" she whispered.

"That's right." He smiled.

"They're all wet," she said.

"They've been in the sea."

"Won't that spoil it?"

He laughed aloud. "No. It's bottled."

"Gosh." She turned to him, her eyes alight. "I knew it," she said. "It's just as I've always suspected for years." She ran her eyes over the stock again. "How absolutely heavenly."

She turned again, this time to examine him more closely. "I saw you in the 'Antelope.' What's your name?"

"Rupert Hammond."

"Were you always a sailor?"

"Only during the war."

He pointed again to the crates. "Well," he said. "There it is. Now you must forget about the whole thing, you understand?"

"I'm furious," she said. "Why have I been left out of it?" She screwed up her eyes and nodded grimly. "I absolutely insist on being in on it."

He said firmly: "You will go home and put the whole affair out of your mind. Come on."

He held open the door while she went down the steps and into the blackness of the tunnel, then blew out the lamp and closed the door.

"I can't see a thing," she said.

"Give me your hand. I know this tunnel."

He groped in the darkness for her hand and found it.

He squinted along the barrels. "Whose gun did you say?" he asked

RUPERT HAMMOND had first encountered Captain Biddle a few hundred yards from the beaches of Dunkirk. Hammond was then a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. His own ship, which was a small fast vessel of the M.T.B. type, had been sunk in a brief but conclusive action; his Oerlikons had had but one Messerschmitt to their credit; the second, at which his gunners were firing, was skimming low over the surface of the sea machine-gunning the long queues of soldiers who, chest-deep in the oily water, were patiently awaiting a ship of some kind which would take them aboard and convey them to England.

Hammond engaged the plane and had at least the satisfaction of seeing the tell-tale whiff of smoke burst from the aircraft's portside engine; but it was carrying a couple of small bombs, one of which it jettisoned immediately under the stern of Hammond's ship. Most of the crew were killed; Hammond and one of his gunners were flung clear, to be picked up by Captain Biddle, master of the Thames tugboat *Gravesend Venus*.

Laden with cheerful, if disappointed soldiers, the *Venus* returned to Dover. But Hammond, vastly encouraged by a number of mugs of hot whisky and tea, was reluctant to be put ashore.

They made the return trip altogether seven times during the day and night which followed, and Hammond came to have a wholesome respect for the man with whom he shared the perils and satisfaction of those fantastic days, not only for the casual skill with which he handled his sturdy little craft, but for his own sake.

There was something about Biddle which appealed to him irresistibly. Biddle in turn accepted the younger man's presence aboard his tugboat—and Biddle's acceptance, as Fred Starling, the

mate, informed Hammond, was approval —perhaps sensing something kindred in his character. The fact of it was that both had a flair for piracy—as indeed have all men in a greater or lesser degree. In Biddle the instinct was very near the surface; in Hammond it was buried beneath an elaborate education, and a lifetime of social intercourse.

Still, there it was, evincing itself in the immediate understanding they reached and in the absolute unanimity of opinion on such matters as they had time to discuss on the little bridge of the tugboat during the operation; it was something Hammond never found elsewhere and so never forgot.

They did not meet again till after the war. Then, after a year in an estate agent's office, Hammond decided that he had had enough of the highly respectable and altogether legal business of holding up househunters to ransom. When it came to deciding between blackcoated, bowler-hatted, briefcased spivvery, and the swashbuckling illegality of smuggling, he knew where his allegiance lay.

He found it at the Liberty. Colonel Gill was of the same mind. Smuggling, he held, was a proper pursuit for a gentleman. He was also, he said, dying for a decent drink. The rest of the men of Anderida took to the work like ducks to water. No secret was ever safer than was Hammond's with the marshmen, and after some six or seven years of outwitting the numerous forces of a dangerous enemy, he anticipated very little bother with Urquhart and Hewitt.

Since tentative arrangements had already been made with the French, it remained only to find Biddle, whom Hammond had always kept in mind as the man for the job, and to buy a trawler as cheaply as might be.

A very few inquiries along the waterfront of London River sufficed to show that there was no better-known figure between the Upper Pool and Gravesend Reach than Captain Biddle. He was majestically delighted to see Hammond again, and expressed a sincere approval of the project.

It took two months to find the *Frolic*. She was a Ramsgate trawler, small but well-found. Biddle took navigational command, with Hammond aboard as owner and super-cargo. Biddle found the crew: Fred Starling, who had himself worked for the Upper Pool Towage and Lighterage Company and was himself turned fisherman; Alfred Gosling, a Dover man, and finally Sigismund, the Norwegian engineer. The ship was bought with Hammond's own money; there was enough left of his capital, after the necessary repairs had been carried out, for roughly a year of running at a small loss.

"We are not in business for loss," said Biddle, however.

In no circumstances could Captain Biddle have been called a handsome man. Fastidious people sometimes found his appearance frankly repellant—to the point, indeed, in some cases, of fascination. For the unlovely exterior was overlaid with a certain magnificence of manner, a kind of disreputable splendour which was almost hypnotic in its effect. Only far beyond the heavy-lidded eyes was there a glint of the saturnine humour which put the rest in its proper perspective.

Once its existence was known, then the thick black brows, the heavy face framed by a double chin which, but rarely shaved, was a deep blue-black in colour, were relatively unnoticed. He wore a seaman's jersey whose woollen ribbing, stretched across the vast belly, resembled lines of longitude drawn from pole to pole of a globe.

On his shaven poll there was a bowler hat. It was very old and the brim was bent and frayed. It was the first thing he put on in the morning, and the last he removed at night. He was wearing it at the evacuation from Dunkirk; he was still wearing it when Hammond met him again seven years later.

The routine was surprisingly simple.

The trawlers fished in one of two ways, sometimes both: by trailing nets over the stern, or by dropping anchored nets attached to buoys, returning a few hours later to haul them in.

The French fleets operated in a very similar manner. Each fleet was restricted to such fishing grounds as lay outside the normal three-mile territorial limits, but this was a handicap which in fact suited Hammond's purpose quite well.

For Jacques Malherbe, his French counterpart, would approach to within three miles of the English coast on a prearranged bearing, would drop the cases of liquor overboard in his nets, strengthened for the purpose, and mark their position with the usual buoys. The buoys were painted with a small luminous cross. On the following evening, innocently trawling the same grounds, the *Frolic* hauled them up.

The matter of payment was no less simple.

Hammond replaced Malherbe's nets, attaching to them a small box containing money and next week's order; he preferred to pay by barter—with, for instance, a few bales of untreated sheep's wool, clippings of the merino sheep for which Anderida was famous—than with sterling, and did so whenever possible. In due course Malherbe returned to retrieve his nets and, ostensibly, his fish.

In this way they were able to buy, sell and correspond without difficulty. Hammond and Biddle landed the liquor at Bird Inlet. They would then fish for a few hours in earnest and return to Rye with the catch, inconsiderable though it often was.

There were, however, two weak links in the chain, both of them appealingly human and therefore, perhaps, the more dangerous.

The first of these was Captain Biddle's concern for his customers. Too often it took the form of an insistence upon sampling the various brandies, wines and liqueurs which he handled.

When at last he fell overboard—happily into one of their own nets—and was found to be abominably drunk, Hammond forbade any further interference with the cases.

The second was they made so much money on the one day and night in the week, which, by agreement with Malherbe and Colonel Gill, they devoted to running liquor, that it was only with relentless self-persuasion that they were able to carry on the tedious and largely unprofitable business of fishing on the other days and nights. Once they had caught enough fish to make a convincing showing in the holds, both Biddle and Fred Starling were wont to leave them there. Delivery and sale would only involve further distasteful trawling; and Hewitt would never notice, for fish, like sheep and Chinamen, were, as Biddle pointed out, largely unrecognizable one from the other.

So the fish remained in the holds sometimes for days and even weeks, and sooner or later, particularly in warm weather, would begin to smell rather strongly.

Indeed, it was only when they could no longer tolerate the stench that they agreed to deposit the offending stock in the sea and set about catching a fresher supply.

When Hewitt, the Customs man, had completed his inspection of the little trawler that morning he joined Captain Biddle at the rail.

"I think there's going to be some very bad weather, Captain Biddle," he said.

Biddle raised an eye to the clouds. "We wouldn't be surprised, Mr. Hewitt," he said weightily.

They watched the slow rise and fall of the water.

"I don't like this swell," said Hewitt.

"Very nasty, Mr. Hewitt."

"What has happened," said Hewitt, "to your Mr. Hammond this morning?"

"Why, nothing, Mr. Hewitt," said Biddle, surprised. "What should have happened?"

"I was just wondering," said Hewitt mildly. He had seen the *Frolic* sail on the previous afternoon with a full complement; now the trawler had docked again and Hammond was no longer aboard.

Biddle's eyes followed a matchbox going out with the tide. "Mr. Hammond," he said, "has nipped ashore for a cup of coffee and a bite to eat."

Hewitt shook his head. "He shouldn't do that, you know, not till after the inspection. It's very irregular."

"No," said Biddle, "he ought not to have done it."

"The law has to be respected," Hewitt said, "no matter who it is."

"Just so," said Biddle sonorously, "we'll have to speak to him."

"A matter of routine," said Hewitt.

"You may leave it in our hands, Mr. Hewitt."

"Thank you, Captain." Presently he said: "What I don't understand is what a young man like Mr. Hammond——"

"Mr. Hammond," Biddle broke in, "is a gentleman fisherman, the same as others is gentlemen farmers."

"Ah. Learning from the bottom."

"Precisely."

He watched Hewitt pedal away along the quayside. Then he went slowly down the companionway and eased his great bulk into the little cabin. Fred Starling, the mate, was asleep on the bunk.

"Fred," said Biddle. Fred slept on peacefully. "Fred!" he said again, louder.

The mate sat up suddenly, his red hair bristling ferociously.

"Put the catch ashore, Fred."

The mate looked blearily at his skipper.

"Catch?" he said, "What catch?"

"The fish."

"My dear Cedric," said the mate, with a certain sour patience, "do you know 'ow long them fish 'as been in the 'old?"

"What's the matter with them?"

"They stink."

"Then we shall have to catch some new ones."

The mate nodded. "Very well." He lay back again and closed his eyes.

Captain Biddle set his elbows on the cabin table and looked at Hammond beneath heavy lids.

"Wenching," he said.

"Not at all. A girl . . . a perfectly ordinary girl."

"She followed you to the abbey?"

"That's right."

"Representing a newspaper?"

"So she said, and I see no reason to disbelieve it. There's nothing to worry about. She's a Marsh girl."

"Nothing to worry about," Biddle murmured. He sank his great blue-black chin on to his hands. "You can't be left alone a minute."

"My dear Cedric——"

"It was understood," said Biddle, "that if either of us was to get mixed with a lilywhite . . ." he tapped the table slowly . . . "with a lilywhite in a matter of business, then we'd pack up and go home. We gave a solemn promise."

"I remember it well."

Biddle shook his head.

"Once," he said, "a considerable time ago, we was married to a lily-white. She left us for a quartermaster of the Buffs. A very inferior fellow, to our way of thinking."

"She must have thought he was all right."

"She thought very highly of his character, she said."

"What did you do about it?" asked

Continued on page 24

THIS WEEK'S COVER

WHODUNIT? Certainly one of Douglas L. Mays's cover kids threw the pane-busting snowball—but which? The eldest boy looks too weighed down with brotherly responsibility to be guilty, and the tiny tot he's shielding with his arm can't yet have mastered the rolling of snowballs. Our guess is that the girl in the middle did it. She has such an innocent look and, deadly evidence, the missile held in reserve.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM

A club manager and a sports writer put opposing views on the question—

DOES SOCCER ENSLAVE PLAYERS?

"If footballers are slaves, then I was a slave for seventeen years—and liked it," says *JIMMY SEED*

DO PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS get a square deal? According to some of our sporting writers it would seem that they do not.

I am the secretary-manager of Charlton Athletic and have been a club manager for nearly twenty years. I have also enjoyed a good career as a player and thus know the views of both player and club intimately.

I recently read an article that described the professional footballer as a "prisoner handcuffed to the out-of-date rules which govern this great game." The "Mannion case," now happily solved, inspired a lot of this ballyhoo. But there are about 3,500 professional footballers in League football. So, is it fair to advance this one case as an indictment against the Football League Management Committee whose job it is to control eighty-eight leading League clubs in the country?

No Axe to Grind

The members of this committee are not paid for their work. They have no axe to grind, no need to be cheeseparing in their deliberations; the one objective is the advancement of the game.

The Players' Union is out for improvements for its members. On the agenda of the union are such things as (1) increased wages, (2) changes in the transfer system, (3) increased benefits, (4) new form of contract, (5) social security.

I am not against more pay. But not every club could afford it under present conditions. The present big boom may not continue indefinitely and any sudden decline in attendances might react against the players if clubs found that they could not meet increases in pay.

My solution? If the prices of admission were raised to a two-shilling minimum, clubs could pay a £5 per week increase per man.

Would it be fair on the public? I hold the firm opinion that if supporters knew that the extra cash was for the players, they certainly would not object.

In any case, generally speaking, clubs don't want to make money in the sense that a trading concern is out to make profits for its shareholders. Every club likes to have something behind it, but the main issue is for a club to pay its way and not rely on generous directors.

We give players at Charlton everything they are entitled to which the rules permit, and I think we have more players on limit wages than the majority of First Division clubs.

Blame It on Taxes?

Yet at times I have had dissatisfied players to contend with. This has compelled me to seek the root of the present trouble. And I feel it lies in a combination of circumstances embracing loss during war years and the high rate of income tax. Playing careers were cut short during the war and now that players *are* getting higher wages the cost of living and high tax leaves them worse off than they would have been.

And that change in the transfer system? The best football brains in the country have been trying to find a better system for years. They haven't succeeded. But I would ban all transfers after November 30 each year, and I feel that clubs should be safeguarded against players who think they can move from one club to another at will. In extreme cases of deadlock between club and player, the matter should be passed over to the Football League Management Committee.

If a player were allowed to move about and choose his own club, as has been suggested, the life of a football manager would be one long nightmare. Directors would go out of the game in disgust and the game would reach chaos.

An idea of mine is that a player shall not be held by the club placing a transfer fee on his head unless it is prepared to sign him at a wage no less than he formerly received. In other words, he should be given a free transfer.

As for the benefit system: clubs may grant a benefit up to £750 to any player after five years' service. Probably few clubs pay this maximum, and some only give one here and there; it's all they can afford. If the maximum were raised to £1,000, as suggested by the Players' Union, the same conditions would still obtain. Instead, why not fight the case for getting these benefits paid tax free like cricketers' benefits?

The new form of contract which the players want is a matter for the League authorities, but when we come to social security where are we to begin or end?

Every player comes into the game with a chance. He either succeeds or fails. Success should enable any player to make provision for the future; the failure takes another job—with the question of social security unchanged.

It is said that the Players' Union is out to end the "slave era in soccer." The phrase makes me wonder. If it's true, I was a "slave" for seventeen years—and liked it!

"The way soccer players are governed is unmoral, undemocratic and unprincipled," says *ALAN HOBY*

IN NUMBER JIMMY SEED—a great footballer in his day—among my friends. But I also value the friendship of other stars of yesterday, men like Andy Wilson and Billy Meredith. Many of these old footballers emphatically disagree with the Seed slant on soccer.

Who is right? Seed cites the Mannion case. Is it fair to advance this as an example of the unmoral, undemocratic and unprincipled government of football? I claim it is.

Mannion has settled his differences with Middlesbrough and is playing for them again. But the principles of his case remain unaltered.

Mannion, like every boy who becomes a professional footballer, was signed on at seventeen. He received the usual registration fee of £10 plus a one-year contract which also bound him for ever to the rules of both the Football Association and the Football League, the two governing bodies of football.

When a player's original one-year contract has lapsed, under the rules he cannot leave his club, even if he wants to.

For the League and the F.A. have been careful to lay down that on a certain date before the player's contract ends his club must inform him in writing (*a*) if he is to be *retained* (in that case he is offered wages to re-sign for another year); (*b*) if he is to be put on the *transfer* list (in that case he receives no wages at all once his yearly agreement has run out, although he may be transferred for £15,000 or £20,000, of which officially he is not entitled to a penny); (*c*) if he is given a *free* transfer (which means that, once his contract is ended, he is free to go to whichever club will have him. It also means that he gets no wages in the meantime).

But what happens if the player refuses to be retained, or won't re-sign, as was the case with Mannion and Middlesbrough?

Middlesbrough at first refused to release him at all—as a club is perfectly entitled to do under the present rules. So Mannion drew no wages. Then, when he persisted that he would never play for Middlesbrough again, the club reluctantly put him on the transfer list.

From £10 to Thousands

Middlesbrough got Mannion before the war for £10. The price it asked for his transfer was £25,000! Mannion, opposing this, put his own price at £12,000 and refused to sign for clubs able to pay the £25,000. But Middlesbrough wouldn't let him go for less. If they had not come to terms with each other, this deadlock would have remained—and Mannion could never have played League football again, either here or abroad.

If this crazy way of buying and selling players is not slavery, then a new definition of the word is needed.

In my view, the transfer system is football's curse. It should be limited to £10,000 at the outside and it should only be operative in the *close* season. And a player should be entitled to a fifty per cent cut of any fee paid for his services. That would soon cut down this present inflationary buying madness.

There should certainly be a new form of contract between club and player. These contracts should be for three years upwards. This would give Seed his "safeguards" against "players who think they can move from one club to another at will."

Strictly a Business

Clubs should also be able to pay their players up to £20 a week if they want to.

Seed says that many couldn't afford this without raising the admission prices. I don't agree. Football is strictly a business today. And it is a business netting boom profits. Clubs which can't afford to pay their players what they are worth should be given the heave-ho out of the League.

Seed also says that probably few clubs pay the maximum benefit, and some only give one here and there; it's all they can afford.

According to the Players' Union, only ten per cent of all footballers get top pay or a benefit. The rule states that after five years' local service a player *may* be paid a benefit not exceeding £750. "May" is the operative word. In fact, it is up to the clubs whether they pay their players benefits or not. The union also asserts that the average is one benefit for ten to fifteen years' football.

Seed declares that the Football League Management Committee has no need to be cheeseparing in its deliberations.

Yet, out of the £70,000 Jubilee Fund which the players raised before the war in a series of matches—the money to be used to help footballers in distress—the League has paid out less than £4,000 during the past ten years. The Players' Union is inundated every season with appeals for help from players in need. Exactly eighteen players have benefited so far from the Jubilee Fund. A "noble" record, and one of which, no doubt, the Football League is proud.

MONEY TO BURN

by ALISTAIR MacCRAE

ILLUSTRATED BY TISDALL

The kind of company you meet on a raft after shipwreck is important. A guy who has a light for a fag or snaps to show can keep you from going crazy

THERE WERE TWO MEN on this raft which floated about, looking as small and inadequate as only a raft can when it has all the Pacific Ocean to wallow in.

One man was called Timothy O'Malley, and he had a face well used up with the business of living. His eyes glowed deep in his big head. For a long while now they had been busy reflecting the great and lonely glory that a ship makes sliding down to its final bed in the Pacific Ocean.

Yes, he was a big man, this Timothy O'Malley. He looked even bigger dressed as he was that day, in only his torso and a pair of trousers, although by the Grace of God and the Church, the nakedness of his top was broken in two by a rosary that hung round his neck and lay in dark pools of glass against his hairy skin.

The other man was a bit better dressed, having an overcoat and drawers, and a cotton singlet that bulged a bit, but not with muscles. This man carried a gold watch in his hand, holding it by the chain. He looked a very ordinary man, and his presence made even this raft look ordinary. His contours were rapidly drowning in a sea of middle-aged fat.

Somewhere in the blood of his forebears there had been an eastern adventure, and that may have added up to him looking like rubber; that, and the natural shock a middle-aged man gets at first contemplation of the Pacific Ocean from the belly of a raft.

His name was Joe Venables, and, beside the gold watch (which had a name that was not Venables inscribed on it) he carried nearly a thousand pounds stuffed into his singlet. And that wasn't his either.

But he was a polite man haunted by the dream of a restaurant in New York, so he had knocked twice at the purser's door before going in and taking the thousand pounds. Which act of courtesy was totally unnecessary, the purser being at that time sweating blood and doing a Day of Judgment dance with a "Mae West."

O'Malley was the first one to speak, and he didn't do that till after he had made sure there was enough water and food on the raft for a hundred days. But he saw there were no rockets, which underlined a previous opinion he had held about Government departments.

At the moment he made that disquietening discovery, Venables started winding the gold watch, and the sound of it got on O'Malley's nerves, so he broke into conversation. "What," he said politely, "might the time be, chum?"

The rubber face looked long and earnestly at the luminous dial of the gold watch. "It is oh four sixteen hours," he said precisely, using the jargon they mixed decent time with in the war.

AFTER taking a while to decode that one into the time language he had been taught in school, O'Malley nodded. He suddenly remembered that he had two cigarettes in a water-tight case in his trousers pocket, but he didn't take them out, hearing a smoker's cough coming now and again from this fellow's throat. Better, he thought, to wait for his smoke till that one was asleep.

"In the name av Gawd an' the Holy Saint Patrick," he said, "but that's an un-Christian hour to be wakenin' honest people out av their beds to drown them. And a terrible cold night for a good ship to be going down to Davey Jones. What might your name be, anyway?"

"Venables," said the rubber face. "Joe Venables is my name. But she was *not* a good ship. She went bump, bump over the water like an old woman coming down a stair on a bicycle. I was sick for three days."

"They call me O'Malley," said the Irishman. "Stoker O'Malley."

"Myself," said Venables, "I am a cook."

"If I'd been down in that old stokehold I'd be in Hell with me shovel now for sure," said O'Malley, and added "It's getting light."

Venables did not reply, although he heard all right, for he gathered his body into a more compact bundle. He was thinking of the thousand pounds that were next his skin, and tickling him, but he kept his hand from scratching, not wanting his affluence to become general knowledge on that raft.

O'MALLEY was not bothering about him anyway. He was lying, gazing up at the brightening sky and talking into it.

"Yes," O'Malley was saying, "Lighter an' lighter it's gettin' every blessed minute. Soon that blisterin' sky will be like an ould pudden cloth tied down over the world, and you an' me boilin' away inside av it."

A sudden fear struck him. "Venables," he said, "have ye got such a thing as a match on ye?"

The cook looked at him out of his rubber face, and behind it he was thinking all round the probabilities of such a question, in terms of this and that. Then at last he said: "Sorry, but no, I haven't," that being what he considered the wisest thing to say under the circumstances.

His left hand was in his big overcoat pocket, fingering a box of matches even as he spoke.

You're a damned rotten oul' liar, thought O'Malley. Out loud he said: "It's a queer an' extraordin' thing for a sea-cook to be goin' about the oceans av the world without a match. I've niver met wan before so unconsiderin' av the future av events."

"That's foolish talk," said Venables. "I have never met the man who would be thinking of matches in the middle of the dark night with a hole in the boat and water creeping round his toes. I say I have not met him, nor ever will."

O'Malley looked reflective. "You've a long way to travel in the things men does," he said. "Gawd, I knew a man once that brought with him a gramophone an' six records. Now that was a man that I call a man. He had spirit."

"He was mad," said Venables. "What did you want matches for, anyway?"

"Well," said O'Malley, the patience of his soul stretching out into his words. "If ye want to know, I was just goin' to light a fire." He thought: "That will put this yellow bilge rat off the trail av me last two cigarettes."

His remark caused a ripple to run quickly across Venable's face.

"A fire," he said hoarsely. "That is you making a joke, I suppose."

"Damn the joke," said O'Malley. "There's nothin' like a big roarin' fire to keep the thought av a cold death at a respectable distance."

A deeper stillness than ever before settled down on the cook as he absorbed that. He sat in his end of the raft like a great fat mushroom, the lids of his eyes drooping down, and one hand laid limply on his knee. Slowly he spoke again.

"There was a gipsy woman once told me my fortune," he said. "She told me I would be burned to death."

O'Malley sat bolt upright and laughed. "Well," he said, "Next time ye meet that ould girl ye can tell her she's a liar. An' what's more, you'll have your hair decorated with some lovely seaweed to prove it."

"I am to be burned to death on the top floor of a great hotel," said Venables, with a quiet satisfaction. "Yes, a hotel with carpets you could sink in up to your knees."

"A lovely death indeed," said O'Malley, and looked round the vast immensity of the Pacific Ocean. Turning quickly away from its terrifying emptiness he said: "I always did hate the Eastern trade. What about something to eat?"

BOTH ate sparingly of biscuits and beef washed down with water, and after that was done, O'Malley spoke again.

"If I had anythin' to do with the orderin' av the universe," he said, "there would be more earth an' less water attached to it."

Venables did not answer. He was still thinking about the matches, and wondering whether he should throw them overboard when O'Malley wasn't looking. There was a horror in the cook's soul about fire, and the thought of the raft burning kept eating into his brain.

But O'Malley seemed to have forgotten the matches now. Suddenly he said: "Have ye any pictures with ye?"

Venables shook his head. "I do not understand," he said. "Why should I have pictures?"

"Photographs," said the Irishman. "Photographs of your wife, your kids . . . your old sweethearts. Anything to pass the time."

Again the cook shook his head, and O'Malley tore the air with a great vigorous curse. "What kind av a man are ye to get sunk with at all?" he roared. "The last time I was sunk there was a man there had enough photographs to make into a pack av cards, though we had to use his oul' mother for the ace of spades, Gawd rest her."

"My family . . . they are not in any picture," said Venables. "We don't believe in pictures."

O'Malley looked him up and down, and his great muscles trembled to jerk some movement into the still heap opposite him. "I'm tryin'," he explained patiently, "to keep the crew av this raft from goin' intirely mad, an' so far ye're not bein' a great deal av help to me."

VENABLES looked at him, and did not speak. He was thinking how peaceful it would be floating in the Pacific without this Irishman. He was thinking he could have counted his money then, and played with his dreams.

"There's a certain drill," said the inexorable O'Malley, "that keeps seamen on rafts from losin' what few wits they possess, and that drill consists av eatin' an' drinkin', sleepin', readin', playin' cards, lookin' at photographs, an'——" He broke off suddenly, having remembered that he couldn't mention smoking, which he was saving up till this fool of a cook was asleep.

The day was going to be very hot so they both lay down on the bottom of the raft, to do nothing except breathe and think their separate thoughts. The Irishman was thinking of his two cigarettes, and how he would have enjoyed them . . . a few puffs at a time to stretch them over a span of days, if only he could get a match, and this mad fool that was with him could become as unconscious as he looked.

At the other end of the raft the cook was nursing his thousand pounds, and thinking of the restaurant he would buy in New York, if this Irish coal-heaver would only die before he drove him completely mad with his talk of matches and photographs and fires. The sun crept up on them, lying with their thoughts, and before another hour had passed they had fallen asleep, almost simultaneously.

It was late evening when O'Malley awakened and looked across at his companion. "Glory be," he whispered. "The runt's lyin' there fast aslape, an' here's me Heaven-sent opportunity."

He crept on hands and knees over the couple of yards or so that separated them, and looked down on the sleeping body of the cook. Venables lay like a man who is dead, with his two hands quietly composed across his chest, which was a queer uncanny thing to O'Malley, who did not know about the thousand pounds that were hidden in there.

"Well," he whispered to himself,

As O'Malley drew the matchbox out, Venables awoke. Before he could shout, O'Malley hit him on the chin with his knotted fist

"Here goes, an' I hope for his own sake, oul' rubber face doesn't waken."

He slipped his great hand gently into the pocket of the coat, and sure enough his fingers felt the edges of a box of matches. But as he drew the box out, Venables opened his eyes, and his cod's mouth at the same time. Only, what he shouted didn't get time to become a word because O'Malley threw a knotted fist at his chin, where it landed like a hammer-head sinking into dough. Venables went into the dark again with a peaceful sort of a grunt.

"I'm sorry I had to do that," muttered O'Malley, rubbing his knuckles, which were bleeding a bit with the force of the blow. "But by Gawd, ye fairly asked for it, hidin' them matches."

From his trousers pocket he drew out his water-tight case with the two cigarettes. He lit one, drawing the soothing smoke into his lungs with an expression of rapture.

It was at that moment that O'Malley heard a sound high above in the darkness of the new night that had dropped over the world like a black bag. A droning sound, it was, such a sound as could only be made by a million bees, or an aeroplane. And O'Malley knew it was not bees.

The sound drove straight down through the darkness like a spear into his brain, and it brought a hot sweat of urgency out on his forehead. He began to talk to himself, in a great mill-race of jumbled words and sentences. "Attract their attention," he told himself. "Make a signal. Make a fire. But how?"

He glared round the raft for something to make a fire with, something that would burn quickly and brightly, and his eyes came to rest on Venables again.

"That big coat," he muttered. "No," he rejected it. "Too slow burning." And then his eyes rested on the white singlet. "Might do," he told himself. "That'll make some sort of flame."

He tore at the singlet, and as it ripped down, he saw beneath it the notes, hundreds upon hundreds of precious bits of paper. Seizing a handful, he laid them in the middle of the raft, lit a match and applied the flame. The notes burst into a red and yellow dance in the darkness. More notes. Still more notes. He stumbled back and forward from the fire to the unconscious Venables, taking the bundles of notes from his body and heaping them on the flames.

And at last O'Malley got his reward, when he saw a solitary flare shooting up from the heart of the droning noise over his head. That flare told him it would only be a matter of time before a rescue ship was directed to pick them up.

And O'Malley began to laugh and cry at once, and then to pray silently over the burning notes with his great coarse fingers climbing up and down the smooth beads of his rosary.

That's the way he was, and kneeling down too, when Venables awoke, sweating cold fear with the smell of burning paper in his nostrils, and nothing tickling the skin inside his vest.

He did not speak or cry out, but his hands clenched and his eyes took on a terrible look of hate. He rose to his feet and began to move forward. Then the fire took a last leap up and showed the bowed back of O'Malley with the great muscles lying like knots of wood round his shoulder-blades and down his arms. So the cook's hands fell open again, and he crawled painfully over to the centre of the raft, and sat down to look on the last of the burning notes with a face on which was written all the dead loss in life.

In that face all dreams had died. And in the eyes of Venables two brilliant tears waited to roll down the clay of his cheeks.

As the light of the new day grew on that face, and what it looked down on became no more than a handful of white ashes, O'Malley looked at Venables, and suddenly felt in his heart the searching hand of pity. It was time to forgive.

He took out the watertight cigarette case with the single cigarette in it, and offered it to Venables.

The cook looked at it, at the big puzzled face of O'Malley, and then far away to where a smudge on the horizon was rapidly growing into the ship that would rescue them.

"No, thank you," he said, in a dull calm voice. "I do not smoke."

O'Malley sat down on the gunwale of the raft and lit the cigarette, blowing the smoke into the rubber face of his companion, who took no notice, but sat as still as a mushroom.

"Well, damn me eyes," sighed O'Malley, "of all the ungrateful little runts to be sunk with. . . ."

Inventor B. Greenaway with his machine for automatically franking letters

FREE SPEECH

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SCHEME provides for most of our bodily disabilities, but there is one notable exception.

The many to whom walking is a daily torture owing to foot troubles such as corns, bunions, callouses and fallen arches, must still suffer in silence or have recourse to expensive treatment by chiropodists. If this treatment were made free under the scheme it would earn the gratitude of many sufferers who cannot now afford professional attention. —JOHN ROBERTS, 5 Wannock Lane, Willingdon, Eastbourne.

Coining a New Phrase

NOW THAT THE WORDS "*Ind. Imp.*" are in future to be omitted from new coins, should not the other Latin abbreviation, "*Fid. Def.*" be similarly treated?

This title ("Defender of the Faith") was conferred on Henry VIII by the Pope at a time when England was nominally Catholic.

The country now being Protestant, with freedom of religion, this archaic title could well be dropped in favour of, perhaps, "Defender of the Realm."—J. S. PALMER, 29 Clapton Common, London, E.5.

Parted When They're Old

WHILE VISITING A workhouse with a group of friends who conduct services in the various wards every month, my husband noticed a screen round one of the beds.

He commented on it, and was told it was the golden wedding of a couple of inmates. Normally separated in different wards, they were allowed to be together in privacy for a few hours to mark the occasion.

I nearly wept when I heard this. Surely something could be done to allow aged couples to spend their last years together in modest comfort.—MRS. A. L. PARSONS, Tytherley, Crossgate Moor, Durham.

Sequel from Australia

SINCE MY LETTER expressing surprise at the lack of response by recipients of food parcels from Australia (JOHN BULL, December 18), I have received nearly 600 letters from people in every county of England, Scotland and Wales, and have now amended my views.

As it will be impossible to answer all these letters, may I, through your columns, sincerely thank all those readers who overwhelmed me with their gifts and cards, and reciprocate their good wishes? — H. JACKSON, J.P., 2 St. Annes Square, South Strathfield, Sydney, Australia.

S O S

NOW THAT THE LABOUR PARTY is drawing up its election programme for 1950 may I suggest the inclusion of the nationalisation of the lifeboat service? Surely such a vital service should not be dependent on voluntary effort and the collecting box.—ROSS PRESTON, Old School House, Newchurch, near Ashford, Kent.

Invented Stamp Machine

I READ WITH INTEREST Miss B.M.P.'s letter (JOHN BULL, January 8) regarding a machine for stamping letters automatically. My father, Mr. B. Greenaway, of Swindon, invented and submitted to the Postmaster-General an automatic franking machine about fifteen years ago, which was acknowledged to be an excellent and foolproof idea.

The official view, however, was that a change-over would be too expensive, and the idea was dropped. — MRS. MONA BRIGHT, 98 Kingswood Road, Gillingham, Kent.

A Mayor's Duty

IN CLAUD MORRIS'S article, "Britons on the Spot" (JOHN BULL, January 8), mention is made of the case of Alderman Lane, of Wolverhampton, a Roman Catholic mayor who attended other services.

But there was no necessity for Alderman Lane to have made a choice between his faith and his civic duties. A mayor is allowed to send a deputy to attend a church service in an official capacity. In the case of a Catholic mayor, the Catholic Church rules that this should be done.—L. M. DERMOTT, 42 King Street, Moston, Manchester, 9.

Idea That Counts

CLAUD MORRIS IMPLIES that patriotism is more important than ideas. I disagree.

Was it right for the people of Germany to connive at the slaughters in Belsen merely because these were a part of national policy? Would there ever have been a war if German Christians had put creed first and country second?

The only hope of world government lies in the gradual disappearance of national sovereignty. People must judge ideas on their merits and not by their places of origin.—K. S. ELLIS, 117 Firth Park Road, Sheffield, 5.

Mays's "Talking Picture"

CONGRATULATIONS TO Douglas L. Mays for his cover painting of the kids having fun upstairs (JOHN BULL, January 8). In my humble opinion it is a masterpiece and I do not remember ever having had so much pleasure from looking at a picture. The explanatory panel wasn't really necessary for this issue: the painting was almost a talking picture.—A. CARROLL, 1 Stetchworth Road, Lower Walton, Warrington, Lancs.

The jacaranda tree

I WAS VERY SORRY to reach the end of *The Jacaranda Tree*, by H. E. Bates (final instalment, JOHN BULL, January 15).

The narrative of Paterson's retreat was so vivid that the reader could imagine himself fleeing through Burma alongside the hero and his friends on their journey to the last bridge.

I hope there are more of the same kind of serials in store for JOHN BULL readers. — E. PICKERING, 57 Hillside Road, Ackworth, Yorks.

MANY READERS MUST, like myself, be disappointed with the weak ending to *The Jacaranda Tree*. After killing off most of his characters, the author was left with two alternatives—either to let Paterson die of fever, or to let him recover and live with the native girl, Nadia.

Both issues the author funked, and left his readers in doubt as to the real ending.—R. WHITELAW, 53 Highcroft Avenue, Croftfoot, Glasgow.

H. E. BATES (above) was asked by John Bull to comment on the complaint that *The Jacaranda Tree* has a weak ending. Here is his answer:

"I think the criticism invalid. It is surely realized that the bridge, over which Paterson, Nadia and Tuesday finally cross, is more than just a bridge; it is a symbol of hope.

"The point of the final episode is this: the future of Burma lies with the Burmese people—such as Nadia and Tuesday. The affection for their country felt by men like Paterson can strengthen them in fulfilling their own destiny."

P.S.

On Happy Marriage

YOUR correspondent, W. S. S. Roberts, who wrote (JOHN BULL, January 1) asking what were the essentials of a happy marriage, seems to have found the first essential in his desire to make a success of it. To be able to adapt oneself to an entirely new way of life without nostalgia for the past: that and children are the fundamentals.—*Mrs. P. A., Barnsley, Yorks.* (*Full name and address enclosed.*)

THE foundations are two people who love each other for their faults as well as their virtues and who need each other to make life complete.—*Mrs. M. Clarke, 12 Woodhill Lane, Morecambe.*

DON'T take things for granted. Praise goes a long way to making a woman happy.—*M. E., Ipswich.* (*Full name and address enclosed.*)

THE ability to overlook trifles. Little tiffs can lead to big rows. The philosophy of "Is it so important? All will be the same fifty years from now" goes a long way.—*Mrs. F. E. Tottingham, "Wistow," Charnwood Drive, Thurnby, Leics.*

ABOUT fifty years ago a bishop stated the essentials were "social equality, intellectual sympathy and sufficient means."—*A. Collins, The Villas, Whittle Springs, Chorley.*

DESIGN for a happy home: integrity must be the architect, tidiness the upholsterer; it must be warmed by affection and lighted by cheerfulness. As a protecting canopy, God's blessing.—*Mrs. F. E. Racle, 54 Mount Drive, Urmston, Lancs.*

AN honest resolve by the bride and groom to stay the course. Children have teething troubles; so does marriage.—*Mrs. F. L. Beavis, 41 Franklin Crescent, Mitcham, Surrey.*

NEVER interfere with the way your wife runs her home—even if it isn't the way mother did it.—*Mrs. M. N., Barnsley, Yorks.* (*Full name and address enclosed.*)

EVER-INCREASING tolerance and an ever-decreasing sense of self-importance. —*H. Sudgen, 1 Hebdon Road, London, S.W.17.*

A HOME of your own, mutual interests, consideration, trust, respect, share all money equally, don't have more children than you can comfortably keep.—*Unhappy Widower, Darlington.* (*Full name and address enclosed.*)

DON'T look too hard at your wife in the morning and don't read over meals. —*Mrs. B. Ball, 17 Charlton Avenue, Patricroft, Lancs.*

DON'T be stubborn; if you're in the wrong admit it. And don't correct or contradict your wife before guests.—*W. J. Rump, 37 Marlborough Park Avenue, Sidcup, Kent.*

NEVER stop courting.—*Mrs. Elliott, 2 Lane Cottages, North Biddick, Washington, Co. Durham.*

Because of space shortage only a limited selection of the many readers' letters submitted can be printed. If your views are squeezed out, it does not mean that they have been overlooked by the Editor. For every letter used, John Bull pays one guinea. Letters should be marked "Free Speech" and carry the full name and address of sender for publication.

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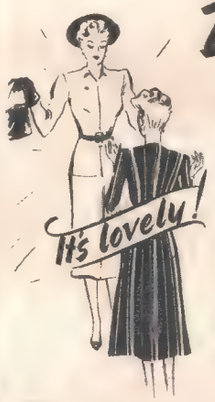

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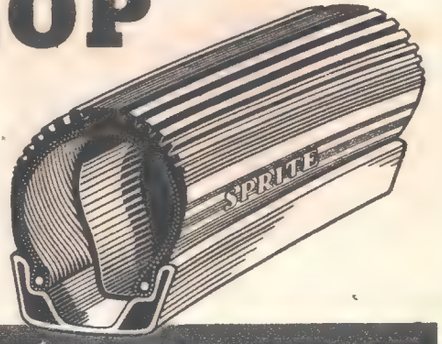

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BP 16/76

What with the intricacies of storage and placating awkward customers . . .

Pub-keeping isn't all beer and skittles

by RICHARD COLLIER

CURRENT STATISTICS SHOW that in Great Britain today there are just over 70,000 publicans. But nobody has yet been able to estimate how many would-be licensees there are who are waiting to take over their first pub.

There are probably quite a few. For instance, when Ralph Everard took over the "Plume of Feathers," a small roadside "local" at Tewin, Herts, there were exactly 120 applicants for the same pub.

That was just a year ago, and since then Ralph and his wife Madeleine have learnt quite a lot about the pitfalls of a publican's life. A publican has to aim to please, and when one of Ralph's customers began a nightly demand for absinthe, Ralph scoured the countryside to oblige him, although without success.

"Did you pick up a taste for it in France?" he inquired. But it appeared that the customer had only had it out there once. "But when I was in the Western Desert," he explained, "I developed a liking for methylated spirits sweetened with brown boot polish, and absinthe struck me as having about the nearest flavour."

Prior to war service in the Far East Ralph had been working in the electrical department of a big West End store. When he was demobbed in 1946 and decided to turn to pub-keeping—"because I wanted to meet people and be my own boss"—he had none of the previous experience required by the brewers, so he had to start from scratch.

While still working at his old job he offered his services in the evenings, free of charge, to the owner of his own local. In return he was to be taught the trade.

Sunlight Turns It Grey

He worked first as assistant cellarman, learning to sort and grade bottles, to keep watch on the stove so that the beer was kept at a level fifty-eight degrees temperature. He learned that bottled beer turns grey on exposure to sunlight, that the right temperature for mineral waters is forty-five degrees, that the pipes of the beer engine need to be cleansed with a solution of soda and hot water.

As a barman in the "public" he learned how to pull a pint and work the cash register, that the "long pull" (giving over-measure) is illegal, that soda in the hot water used for washing up the glasses takes the head off the beer.

He also made a close study of the three-volume *Licensed Houses and Their Management*, with sections on everything from income tax to looking after commercial travellers ("It may be safely asserted that a very large proportion of commercial travellers are gastronomically inclined. . . .").

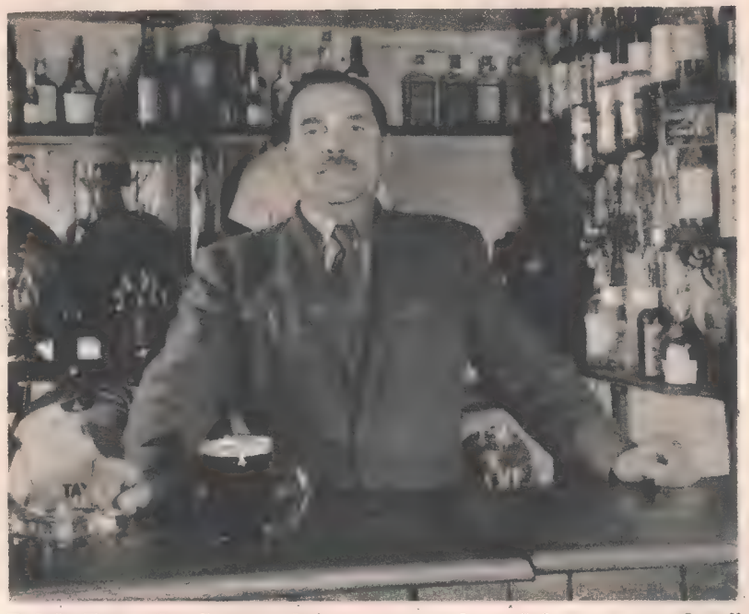
After a year of this Ralph went to several public house brokers and put his name down on their books. Public house brokers are to licensees as estate agents are to house hunters; their fee is a percentage of the total expenses involved in handing the pub over.

Most applicants have to wait anything up to two years for a pub, although Ralph got his in just under ten months. After inspecting "The Plume of Feathers" he was interviewed by the brewery concerned.

Says Ralph: "I was lucky, because I'd got all the particular qualifications they look for these days. I was married, in the thirties, had had some pub experience and my wife *was* prepared to look after catering."

Brewers lay as much stress on the affability of the publican's wife—"she can make or mar the pub"—as on the publican himself. One publican's wife that Ralph heard of used to throw a wet swab in the faces of customers who annoyed her, with the result that business was rarely brisk.

Another publican, who also let rooms, used to greet his male guests genially with: "My goodness, you need a shave." There was rarely any difficulty in getting a room.



Ralph Everard: "I wanted to meet people and be my own boss"

Past Must Be Faultless

Once a publican has been approved by the brewers he has to go before the licensing justices. The local superintendent of police testifies that his record is clean and the transfer is authorized.

Investigation into the applicant's past record is detailed and far-reaching. Ralph knows of one case in which an applicant was refused a licence because he had failed to mention a half-crown fine incurred in a juvenile court for window breaking, twenty-five years before.

Brewers will rarely install a publican in one of their houses on credit; he must have the necessary capital. For a rural pub of average-size dimensions the capital needed would be in the region of £1,300, and £500 of that is deposited with the brewer (who pays the publican interest on it) as security against the book debt, while £200 will normally purchase from the outgoing tenant such stock as remains in the pub.

But on top of that the publican will need to take over loose goods, such as bar furniture and fittings, which will probably cost him another £300. He must then pay a gauger or stocktaker to value his stock, and settle with his broker.

The capital required, of course, varies greatly with the pub. While £250 would see a publican into a small country beer house, a popular West End pub might cost him £10,000 or more.

After his initial deposit with the brewer, any profit that may accrue is automatically Ralph's, since he is not a manager working on salary, but holds his pub on an annual tenancy, which can be terminated by three months' notice on either side. Ralph normally expects to make twenty per cent profit on the year's takings, although out of that he has to keep his wife and himself and their two small sons, pay his rent (roughly £2 a week), his rates (£30 a year), his licence duty (£30 a year). His water rate is low, but in some pubs it runs into large sums because of the great amounts used. And there are various insurances.

Third-party risk is one of the most important policies in a publican's life. One publican Ralph knew, who failed to take out covering insurance, had an accident with a cork remover. The spinning cap of a ginger-ale bottle blinded a customer and the publican had to pay £200 compensation.

Ralph is lucky enough to enjoy a good saloon bar trade, since a publican makes little profit from his public bar. Public bar prices are fixed by the brewers, and beer that the publican buys at 1s. he sells at 1s. 1d. per pint.

Difficult customers are the exception rather than the rule, although Ralph has had his fair share of them. A group of Scandinavian sailors turned up one night and began to drink solidly.

When they began to sing and dance in the public bar Ralph turned them out. They moved round to the saloon, drank three rounds in silence, then started singing again. Turned out of the saloon, they migrated back to the public. This time Ralph intercepted them. "No more," he said. "You understand—no more. You finish, you understand—you finish."

And with a growl of wounded pride one of the sailors replied: "We no Finnish, see? We Swedish—you Russian so-and-so."

One Girl's Direct Approach

A friend of Ralph's, who kept a pub in a small market town, was puzzled by the nightly appearance of a man who was dressed up like "Scarface" Al Capone. He used to bore the regulars in the saloon by involving them in hour-long arguments about the Brighton Trunk Crime.

He worked in a fairground nearby and occasionally a girl friend came to take him home. Her method of calling "Time" was to stand in the doorway of the saloon and fling a glass so that it splintered against the wall near her boy friend's head.

After the fairground had packed up and gone the publican learnt who his strange guests had been. The garrulous drinker was the late Tony Mancini, then only recently acquitted of the Brighton Trunk Crime.

His girl friend was a strip-tease artist in the fairground who worked under the name of "Miss Serenity."

Ralph sells on an average 216 gallons of draught beer, twenty-four bottles of spirits, eighty gallons of bottled beer per month. "The Plume of Feathers" has no beer engines, so that his beer normally arrives in firkins (nine-gallon casks).

Ralph then makes a vent and inserts a porous "spile" (a conical piece of wood) into the bung so that the surplus froth can filter through, replacing it with a hard "spile" later. Beer casks have to be carefully wedged into position on the stands, since jolting may cloud the beer.

Wants More Elbow Room

At times the cellar inspector may call, to taste the beer and see that it is in good condition. The stocktaker, whom Ralph himself employs, calls only once a quarter.

Ralph's life is not all problems and long hours (he opens up at ten thirty and may still be at it after midnight, counting and listing his takings). He likes the life and he likes his customers. His only complaint is that his pub is a little too small.

"Give me a pub in a market town," he says, "with five letting rooms, a brisk luncheon trade and plenty of locals to make the place cosy in the evenings. I'll never ask any more of life than that."

GREEN GROW THE RUSHES

Continued from page 16

Hammond. Biddle sucked a tooth and worked his large jaw.

"Personally, we rejoiced."

"Any idea what's become of the lady?"

"We heard she was party to a bigamous marriage and settled down with a herd of cows somewhere, and the quartermaster. We suppose the poor little beggar's dead now, and glad of it."

Hammond laughed. "What's the moral of that?"

"We look back on the business," Biddle continued, "with great surprise at ourself. If ever a thing was a man's own fault, that was. We talked ourself into it, Rupert. That's the moral. We told ourself we loved her. We endowed her with beauty of body and soul greater than she or any woman ever possessed, or ever could possess. We lied, good God alive—how we lied to that woman!"

He narrowed his eyes at the younger man. "There's men doing it all the time, Rupert. Talking themselves up the aisle. What does a lilywhite have to do? Nothing. Just sit tight and let the fool talk, knowing she's only got to keep her trap shut for him to talk himself into what she wants a good deal faster than she could ever do it. And then what? Then he spends the rest of his life blaming her for not being what he told her she was. It's pitiful to watch—pitiful."

"You worry too much, Cedric," said Hammond at last.

"We hope so," said Biddle. "We sincerely hope so."

AT breakfast next morning, Finch said to his two Ministry colleagues: "This morning we shall visit one of the farms lying between Portenoy and the sea."

"Just as you please," said Fisherwick.

Prudhoe said, "I propose to go and have a chat with the coastguard."

"You're always chatting with people," Finch said. "We have more important things to do than chat."

"I find it very illuminating to contact the local authorities," Prudhoe said. "It's surprising what information of a general nature you can pick up just chatting."

"It all seems rather a waste of time to me. However. . . ." Finch was not altogether sorry to be rid of that dim and chilling presence at his elbow all day. "Fisherwick and I will visit Bainbridge as planned."

They left the "Antelope" on foot and walked down the lane towards the old quayside. They stood on the bank and looked down on the cottage.

A trickle of smoke rose languidly from the chimney.

BEYOND the cottage, but set on higher ground than the house itself, lay the outbuildings—a cowshed, so high as to be almost level with the quay itself; a barn, a few feet lower; a chicken run; in the farmyard lay the nameless debris of all such places—a sprawling midden, a rusty harrow, a cart, a length of hosepipe.

A tiny stream ran out of the bank behind the cottage, through the farmyard and down to the duckpond which lay a few yards beyond the gates, in the open meadow. A few geese foraged dispiritedly in the mud.

Beyond the little farm the wide green floor of the harbour ran smoothly to the distant sea wall.

With Fisherwick at his heels Finch followed the track down the bank to the cottage.

They rapped on the door.

Joseph Bainbridge had a grudge against life. It never occurred to him that his failure might have been due to any shortcomings of his own.

"How's that for size?"

Not at all: it was life which was to blame, and life, more particularly, in the shape of other men.

He had left the Army angry and embittered, a young-old man cheated of the rank to which he had aspired and which he felt to be his due; others had been promoted over his head. A similar fate dogged his career as a farmer, for though he had inherited the little holding in Portenoy from a relative, nothing else came easily to him.

NOW he was an embittered and friendless man of middle age and evil temper. An infringement, however trifling, of what he held to be his rights would set him aquiver with hysterical rage. It did not pass unobserved among his neighbours, however, that his wife treated him with hardly-concealed contempt; in her presence he was quiet, monosyllabic, meek.

Her name was Polly. She was large, tawny, big-breasted; he was small and wiry and had little red-rimmed eyes and a bristling sandy moustache. When she laughed she smacked her broad thighs and threw back her head; Joseph rarely smiled.

Joseph saw the two men on the bank above the house. He slipped behind the door of the cowshed and watched them from its shadow. When they turned from the cottage door, having received no response to their knocking, he was standing at the gate with a long-handled pitchfork beneath his arm.

"What d'yer want?" he said.

"Mr. Bainbridge?" Finch inquired. "We are the sub-commission from the Ministry of Agriculture. Doubtless you are aware that we're making an inspection of the farms in this area. . . ."

"What for?"

"It's a matter of national agricultural policy, Mr. Bainbridge."

"Well, yer won't inspect mine."

Finch cleared his throat and pressed his pince nez more firmly on to his nose. "Perhaps we can have a little talk," he suggested.

"I got nothing to say." His little eyes were inflamed with smouldering rage.

"Come, now, Mr. Bainbridge. . . ."

Something in the manner of the man grated suddenly on Joseph's ragged nerves. "Get off'n my land," he said.

There was a sudden silence. Finch had encountered obstinacy, even hostility more or less overt, but he had never yet been told to make himself scarce with quite so little ceremony.

"I beg your pardon, sir?" he said icily.

"I said get off'n my land."

"We are here on Government business, Mr. Bainbridge," said Finch sharply.

"The Gover'ment's got no business with what's mine."

"Your attitude will do you no good, Mr. Bainbridge."

"If yer don't get off'n my land," said Bainbridge grittily, "I'll have the law on yer."

"Rubbish!" Finch barked. "I'm here to investigate your ability to farm this holding. If you persist in this foolishness, then I shall have no choice but to assume you have something to conceal. Do I make myself clear?"

FOR a moment Bainbridge's mouth worked. "Are yer getting off'n my land?" he said, "or do I have to drive yer off?" His hands, grasping the pitchfork, were shaking.

"I'm warning you," said Finch heavily, "—you are giving me just the grounds I need to recommend immediate nationalisation of this land. . . ." He shook Fisherwick's hand off his arm. "Thank you, Fisherwick, I know what I'm saying." He turned again to Bainbridge. "Now, sir, will you submit to investigation or not?"

"Nationalise. . . ." Bainbridge's lips moved. He looked at them uncomprehending.

"That is what I said. Nationalisation."

Then suddenly Bainbridge was coming at them with the pitchfork. "Get out!" he shouted shrilly. "Go on, get off'n my land. . . ." A flow of obscenities accompanied his movement.

Finch and Fisherwick stepped aside and the man blundered wildly between them.

"Put that thing down, man!" Finch said. "Are you mad?"

"Look out!" Fisherwick cried.

He came at them again, lunging with the fork. Finch barely sidestepped it.

"Go on," Bainbridge shouted. "Clear out, clear out!"

He rounded on them. They backed away, having, in fact, no alternative. He drove them towards the bank.

"Giddout!" he raved. "Go on, go on. . . ."

Finch and Fisherwick, with as much dignity as was left to them, turned and ran. Finch felt the thrust of the fork on the seat of his coat.

They clambered up the grassy slope. On the crest they halted and turned breathlessly.

"I'll summons you for this!" Finch shouted. He struggled for breath. "I'll have you in jail for this. . . ." He breathed hard, dusting his coat where the pitchfork had struck him. "You shall pay for this!"

Bainbridge, purple in the face and bristling triumphantly, watched them. He flourished the pitchfork. "Go on!" he shouted. "Clear out!"

"Never in my life——" Finch began. For a moment he could not speak. "Preposterous," he said at last, "preposterous." He dusted the backside of his coat where the tool had left its cicatrix of mud and rust. "Come, Fisherwick. . . ."

He turned on his heel and marched away along the bank. Fisherwick followed him.

"I shall bring an action for assault," Finch said. "I'll have him up before the magistrates. I'll make an example of somebody before I've finished with this place. It's time they learned there's a law in this country."

PRUDHOE walked along the top of the sea wall towards the coastguards' watchtower. On his right the marsh flowed like a calm green lake towards the distant hills. On his left the sea broke idly on the slopes of the wall, a few yards below the crest.

Some 200 yards farther on the hut itself peered over the wall. It stood on four poles, like stilts, and a ladder went up from the ground to the platform and the door of the hut.

Urquhart, though now under the auspices of the Board of Trade, had, like Hewitt, the Customs House man, served in the Navy. The two had thus a common band of sympathy and understanding.

Urquhart, however, contributed little more than silence to the association, partly because he was of taciturn disposition by nature, and partly because his upper denture did not fit very well; it was loose and had been for many years; if he opened his mouth the denture dropped, greatly to the surprise and confusion of the listener.

So Urquhart kept his mouth shut and his teeth clenched; the habit lent his mildest words a curious menace, as of bitter, bottled fury, hardly less alarming, for those who did not know him, than the sudden snap of falling teeth. He had always told himself he would have them seen to one day, but he had never had the time, somehow.

He heard the footsteps ascending the ladder and through the window of the door watched the crown of the black hat rising towards him.

"Good morning," said Prudhoe, suavely. "May I come in?"

Urquhart nodded dumbly, grimly.

Prudhoe closed the door and looked around him. The cabin could not have been much more than six feet square. It contained a small coke stove, two chairs and a table.

The telescope stood on the table, supported by its tripod, its snout projecting through the little aperture cut in the window to accommodate the instrument. On the table there was a block of report forms and a compass.

"Warm in here," said Prudhoe, with

an appreciative glance at the stove.

Urquhart nodded.

Prudhoe glanced at him curiously, wondering why he did not speak. He saw an old man with white hair, a stubborn jaw and bright-blue eyes narrowed by a lifetime of peering into mists, high seas and great distances.

"I'm one of the agricultural sub-commission," he said affably. "We're having a look round the Marsh, you know."

Urquhart nodded.

"I thought I'd drop in and say hallo . . . a good thing, I always think, to get to know the men on the job."

Through clenched teeth, Urquhart grated: "What's your name, sir?"

Prudhoe recoiled a little. "Prudhoe," he said.

Urquhart picked up a pencil and carefully entered the name on a report form.

Then he said: "I'm mighty glad to see you," but emanating as it did from between locked jaws the greeting was more nearly a threat than a commonplace of intercourse.

"Si' down."

Much puzzled, Prudhoe sank on to the edge of the chair.

"I'd just thought I'd look you up," he said mildly.

"Very kind, I'm sure." How strange it was that the pleasantry, thus ground out, should have so pronounced a tang of irony, so indescribably sinister a flavour!

Prudhoe stiffened. "Not at all," he said. The fellow was plainly in a towering rage about something. The friendly and informative chat which Prudhoe had looked for was apparently to be denied him.

"How d'you find your job?" he inquired politely. "On the dull side, I imagine. . . ."

"Couldn't stay away from it," said Urquhart, with muffled simplicity; he was, in fact, a very simple man.

THIS was it, thought Prudhoe, nodding. The fellow must be very bitter about his work. Not surprising really, Prudhoe thought, though he felt it on his tongue to say: "Hardly my fault, is it?"—for, indeed, you would expect a man to show more consideration for the casual visitor than to plague him with bitter comments on an entirely personal problem. He should be thankful to have work at all, Prudhoe thought, at his age.

"There's the sea to watch," Urquhart grated.

"I can imagine," said Prudhoe, with as much sympathy as he could muster. "I can just imagine . . ."

"And the ships passing."

"Ha. . . ." He hoped he was sufficiently appreciative of so sour and suffocated a brand of humour.

He glanced at the wall beneath the window. "And the wall," he said waggishly.

"And the wall."

They laughed together, the one suitably sardonic, the other with modest pride.

"The flotsam," said Prudhoe.

"And the flotsam," said Urquhart.

"Something happening all the time."

"Always busy, always busy." The old man rocked to and fro on his chair, emitting small sounds between his teeth. "Ey dear, ey dear. . . ."

"Never a dull moment, in fact," said Prudhoe, "what with the ships and the wall and the flotsam and, of course, the smuggling. . . ."

The effect was instantaneous. Urquhart's jaw fell open and the upper denture dropped with a click upon its nether half.

To be continued next week

Under the helmet

by HERBERT HODGE

As he stood mopping his brow, I suddenly realized policemen were human

A GROUP OF US were sitting round the fire the other evening and someone asked what we felt was the most moving sight we'd seen—in ordinary, everyday life. When I could get my spoke in, I said it was the first time I saw a policeman standing in the street with his helmet off, mopping the sweat from his brow.

Everybody laughed; and the man who'd asked the question said he'd meant it seriously. Then one of the women said she thought the most moving sight in the world was the first time you coaxed a smile from a new baby.

That, of course, hit the bullseye, and my policeman wasn't even mentioned again. Yet, for me, he still seems important, because he gave me a new outlook on the police.

He was a very young policeman; obviously what we cabmen used to call "a fresh-caught 'un." It was a warm summer afternoon. I was on the cab-rank in the middle of Kensington High Street. With his helmet off, he looked so softly innocent, so hot, tired, sad and bewildered, as he stood there mopping his brow in the midst of the hubbub, that he fairly tugged at my heart. I suddenly realized policemen were human.

Considering I was over thirty then, I suppose some people would say I'd taken a long time to realize it. But the way you think of the police depends a lot on the circumstances in which you meet them.

Two Points of View

If you're born into the kind of family that policemen touch their hats to, it's probably easy to think of a policeman as a human being. But if you're born into the other kind of family, and especially if you earn your living on the streets, you're apt to see a policeman more as a uniformed robot than as a man. Boots, helmet, notebook, truncheon—and the voice of authority.

For my part, I've always tried to co-operate with the police, and give them a bit of help whenever I could. But I haven't always felt my help was appreciated.

I remember stopping my empty cab in Duke Street, Piccadilly, one afternoon, and walking down to the junction of Jermyn Street, to see what I could do to help sort out the traffic tangle there, which was holding us all up.

I Stood in For One

There was no policeman in sight, so I stood in the middle of the crossroads and started directing the traffic. Everybody dutifully obeyed my signals, (which were pukka Highway Code) and I soon had everything going a treat. I felt quite proud of myself—until I happened to glance over my shoulder and caught sight of a policeman standing on the kerb.

He was giving me one of those long, deep, thoughtful looks. And there was neither admiration nor gratitude in his eye. When he'd looked his fill from the pavement, he came over to me and had a close-up. Then, when he'd quite absorbed me, he said: "Where's your cab?" I pointed to it. "Get back on it!" I got back on it. As I drove it the few yards up to the crossroads, where he was now directing the traffic, I wondered how many traffic offences he was going to blister me for.

He let me drive to the middle of the crossing, and there he stopped me. I opened my mouth to explain, but he got started first. "For God's sake get out of my sight!" he said. "And don't you ever let *me* catch you round here again." So I got away scot free.

All the same, half a lifetime of little experiences like that are hardly the kind of thing that makes a chap want to cheer whenever the police file by. Yet policemen *are* human. I once wrote a little fable in a cab-trade journal about the dreadful fate that befell a too-officious policeman. I heard afterwards that, in one London division, they'd cut it out and put it up on the section-house wall—which I thought was delightfully human of them; though, for some weeks after that, I took special care when driving through their district, just in case they didn't think it was funny.

As a man whose chief interest is getting to know people, I've always felt a bit frustrated with policemen. I don't know whether they're officially forbidden to be friendly with cabmen; but in all my years on the road, even in ten years of lonely nightwork, I don't think I've met half a dozen policemen who were willing to talk in a friendly, unofficial way.

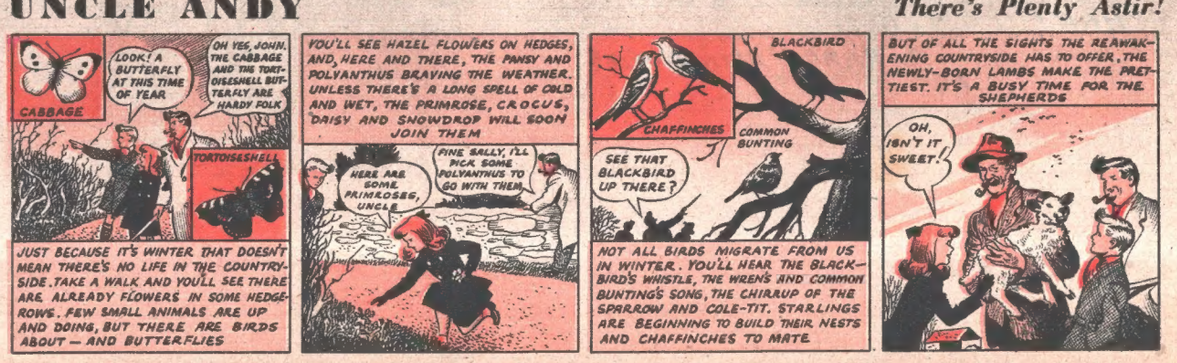
What Makes Him Tick?

Many a time I've wondered what goes on underneath a policeman's helmet as he stands there watching the world go by. What does he really think of it all? Does he feel he's simply an automatic arm of the law, or does he ponder and criticize? What does he think of the whole system? What does he think of himself?

It's all very well to say our police force is the finest in the world. It probably is. But there's plenty of room for improvement. And I'm one of those who believe the road to improvement lies not through more officialism but through a greater friendliness and understanding between the man inside the uniform and the people he is supposed to serve. We still don't know enough about each other as human beings.

UNCLE ANDY

There's Plenty Astir!


CABBAGE
LOOK! A BUTTERFLY AT THIS TIME OF YEAR
OH YES, JOHN. THE CABBAGE AND THE TORTOISESHELL BUTTERFLY ARE HARDY FOLK
TORTOISESHELL
JUST BECAUSE IT'S WINTER THAT DOESN'T MEAN THERE'S NO LIFE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. TAKE A WALK AND YOU'LL SEE THERE ARE ALREADY FLOWERS IN SOME HEDGEROWS. FEW SMALL ANIMALS ARE UP AND DOING, BUT THERE ARE BIRDS ABOUT — AND BUTTERFLIES
YOU'LL SEE HAZEL FLOWERS ON HEDGES, AND, HERE AND THERE, THE PANSY AND POLYANTHUS BRAVING THE WEATHER. UNLESS THERE'S A LONG SPELL OF COLD AND WET, THE PRIMROSE, CROCUS, DAISY AND SNOWDROP WILL SOON JOIN THEM
HERE ARE SOME PRIMROSES, UNCLE
FINE SALLY, I'LL PICK SOME POLYANTHUS TO GO WITH THEM
BLACKBIRD
CHAFFINCHES
COMMON BUNTING
SEE THAT BLACKBIRD UP THERE?
NOT ALL BIRDS MIGRATE FROM US IN WINTER. YOU'LL HEAR THE BLACKBIRD'S WHISTLE, THE WREN'S AND COMMON BUNTING'S SONG, THE CHIRRUP OF THE SPARROW AND COLE-TIT. STARLINGS ARE BEGINNING TO BUILD THEIR NESTS AND CHAFFINCHES TO MATE
BUT OF ALL THE SIGHTS THE REAWAKENING COUNTRYSIDE HAS TO OFFER, THE NEWLY-BORN LAMBS MAKE THE PRETTIEST. IT'S A BUSY TIME FOR THE SHEPHERDS
OH, ISN'T IT SWEET!

HE WOULDN'T SAY DIE, SO . . .

GASSED and a prisoner in the Kaiser war, reader J. W. Connor has been totally disabled for years and had to give up his work as a clerk. But he has kept on juggling with words to fit into neat *Bullets* and the other day, for the second time since 1946, a telegraph boy called at 37 Rowan Street, Leicester, with JOHN BULL's congratulations on winning a *Bullets* First Prize.

A £250 cheque rewarded this "Bulleteer" for his striking effort, AT THE PANTOMIME—*Civilization's* PRODUCED, "GODS" LAUGHING? "The news of this magnificent award has proved a better tonic than many a bottle of medicine," he assured us. "I'm an old *Bullets* enthusiast and during my fifteen years' enjoyment of this hobby I've had a good number of cheques and other useful awards."

Why not make *Bullets your* hobby? Make a start by entering the coupon below for this week's £750 offer, and, on Friday, February 18, you may well receive a £500 First Prize telegram.

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RULES 1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated February 26 and in JOHN BULL dated March 5, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make *Bullet* as usual.

Home Of The Free	Clue To The Mystery
Humanity's Wealth	Pink Elephants
Another Milestone	Hailed With Delight
Given More	Sonny's Got Mumps,
Tip For Strachey	No Friend [So
Fame And Fortune	Narrow Escape
Overcrowded	Playing Second Fiddle
War On The Criminal	Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions
Hard Truth	..... Woke Up And
Broke His Mother's Heart	Watching The .....
Nothing To Be Proud	Put Before.....
Deafening [Of	Trouble With.....
Expert From Whitehall	For Love Of.....
	When The.....Went

GET THIS GUIDE

To get the help of *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, including extra winners for your guidance, advice from competitors and an invaluable "Weighing-up" of Clues for Crossworders, enclose label below with your *Bullets* or Crossword entry this week.

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope, covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "COMBINED," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY "Bullets" 1,666 (or Xword 618) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

BULLETIN LABEL
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"Never give up," urges First Prize-winner Connor. "Get the help of *'Bullets' Bulletin* and enter regularly." The label above your coupon will bring you a copy of this bright little weekly, published specially to help you to win.

2 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD 614

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Crisis or Crises. 3, Car. 5, Rare. 6, Rain. 8, House. 11, Box or Fox. 13, Fool. 14, Whiz. DOWN: 1, Cards. 2, Sheet. 4, Ranter. 7, Shot. 9, Spoof. 10, Dream. 12, Cash.

TWO £100 SHARERS: E. C. Cooper, School House, Bierton, Aylesbury, Bucks; Mrs. K. E. Naldrett, 229 Tudor Road, Leicester.

Awards value £25 for Runners-up shared between 17 entrants. Winners and Runners-up also receive Breakfast, Dinner and Tea Services.

"Bullets" Winners 1,662

FIRST PRIZE, £500: M. Rice, Bekonscot, East Street, Tollesbury, Essex:
NOBODY EXPECTS MIRACLES—"NOBODIES" PERFORMING THEM!

SECOND PRIZE, £50: L. P. Wenham, 81 Regent Street, Stowmarket: IN TWO—EUROPES, "ONE WORLD" VANISHES.

THIRD PRIZE, £25: H. D. Thom, Lunelea, Rattray, Blairgowrie: ARMY OF OFFICIALS—DEFENDING BRITAIN FROM—PROSPERITY!

OTHER AWARDS: £20: W. J. Fanner, "Walburton," Littlestairs, Shanklin: BRITAIN'S SWAN-SONG—TURNING TO COCK-CROW, CROAKER! £18: Mrs. P. Payne, 17 North Avenue, W. Worthing: WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS—FOR THE STARS, *Man*? £16: L. A. Spracklen, 5 Damers Road, Dorchester: MANKIND'S LIGHTHOUSE—OR MARS': HELTER-SKELTER, UNO? £14: W. V. Williams, 50 Towngate, Northowram, Halifax: TOO MANY CHILDREN—"STICK 'EM UP!" CAPTURING. £12: A. E. Baldwin, 16 Royal Arcade, Keighley: IN TWO—TINY ROOMS, "HEARTBREAK HOUSE." £10: T. O. Davies, 3 Hughes Street, Miskin, Mountain Ash: ON THE DOOR-STEP—TO SUEZ, "RAT-TAT'S" OMINOUS. £10: Mrs. D. Taylor, Highgate, Armitage, Rugeley: COMRADESHIP'S THE KEY, SO—FIND DAD THE KEYHOLE!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see this week's *"Bullets" Bulletin*. Supplies limited, so apply immediately on 2d. stamped postcard addressed: Result 1,662, *Bulletin* Dept., 1 Slingsby Place, London, W.C.2.

All prizes have been posted, including 50 of £1 and 3,000 new "Good Shot" awards.

MORE HOUSEHOLD PRIZES for XWORDS

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THIS WAY TO WIN

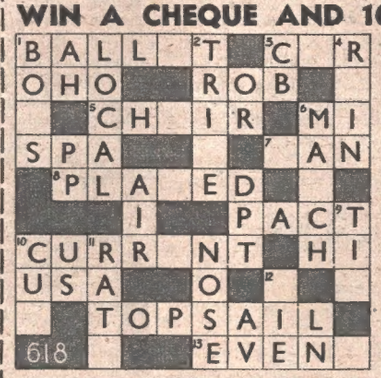
USEFUL cheques have been won by 26 readers in the last 10 Crossword contests; work out now that puzzle below and you may win not only a cheque but one of the 100-piece Services such as have been received by 77 competitors.

First complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter one extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues **XWORD 618**
1. Is quite often of a dramatic character
3. Roadhog may have to swerve dangerously to avoid another
5. May possibly be too strong
7. When things get too hot this may be advisable
8. Wood needs to be this with skill and judgment
10. May become shrunken or possibly dried up
13. Average betting man may not be attracted by

Down Clues
1. On speech days they are inclined to be stiff and awkward
2. Popular orator finds it difficult to avoid talking certain amount of such stuff
4. It's common experience to find weeds growing rapidly in this
6. Sometimes begins with a resounding blow
9. People have sometimes been led up the garden by a man's this
10. Swollen head often results when one wins
11. Not very much of a worry to farmers
12. Is often not so white as it should be

WIN A CHEQUE AND 100-in-1 PRIZE!



In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated February 19.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
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(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

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Write to John Bull About It

John Bull's expert advisers help to solve readers' personal problems. Answers on points of general interest will be published each week

Engineering Apprentices

F. C. (Reading): Under the Ministry of Supply's scheme for engineering and craft apprentices, about 1,000 young men are now training to be engineer-scientists. They will eventually take key positions as skilled scientists and technicians in industry. The examinations for engineering apprentices are held by the Civil Service Commission. Only the "cream" of those who pass are selected for the Ministry of Supply's special scheme. There is a written examination and those who pass are sent on to take the "aptitude" tests. If they succeed in those they are given a personal interview. Successful candidates can then settle down to five years of intensive training in engineering, with a sound general education as a background, to fit them for the responsibilities of the profession.

Landlady's Pension

N. W. (Halifax): If a woman was given a widow's pension of 26s. a week before July 5 last, it will only be reduced—because of earnings over £1 a week—if she is under sixty-five. Profit from taking in a lodger may be considered as earnings, but this depends on the amount of service given. Except in special circumstances, the earnings by way of profit from this source would not be regarded as exceeding 20s. a week, where the number of lodgers is not more than two.

Free Spectacles

A. W. (Liverpool): Under the Supplementary Ophthalmic Service there is a range of ten types of frames which are supplied free. There is also a range of nine types (better frames and other refinements). In selecting these the patient pays a specified charge—from 1s. to 8s. Anyone preferring spectacles of a type not included in either of these categories must pay the whole cost of frames and lenses.

Defence Medal

S. D. (Yeovil): Applications by members and ex-members of the civilian services for the Defence Medal can still be made. They should be sent to the Defence Medal Central Index, Home Office, Whitehall, London, S.W.1.

Tax Relief

G. C. (Sudbury): No income tax relief can be claimed in respect of a motor cycle unless it is actually used in the course of a person's employment. Getting to and from the place of work does not count.

Soldiers' Clothes

A. L. (Blackpool): Soldiers buying their second-best suits of battledress are charged 32s. The charge for an overcoat is 38s. No free issues of clothing are made to men called up after 1946.

Number, Please

R. P. (Woolwich): The Post Office says that, although there is nothing illegal about a person making a call from one phone box to another and this is not contrary to any regulations, the practice is not one to be encouraged.

Readers' queries (except medical) should be addressed to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 186 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Stamped envelope for reply, please.

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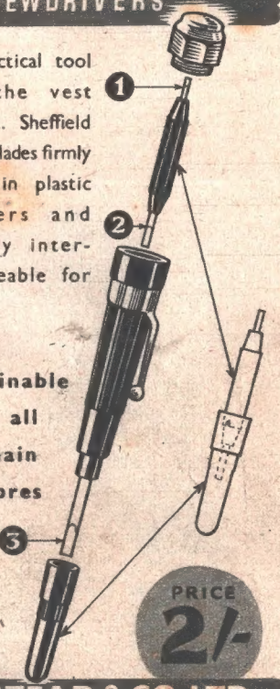

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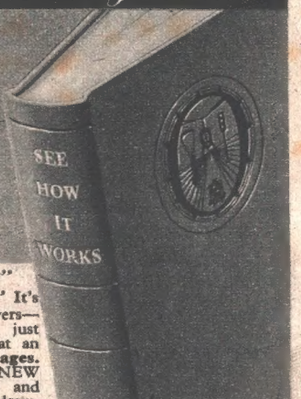

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